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Now when fantastic visions fill the air,
Sorrow surrenders to a dull despair.
—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 2.

THE
Wandering Jew

BY

EUGENE SUE

CONTAINING THE DORE ILLUSTRATIONS

In Five Volumes—Volume Two

PETER FENELON COLLIER, PUBLISHER
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOLUME TWO.

1. Now when fantastic visions fill the air,
Sorrow surrenders to a dull despair.

2. Secure he stands, and fearless gazes round,
Where arrows fall and corpses strew the ground.

3. Trees intertwined with snakes he walks beneath.
Safe thro' dark valleys ripe with hideous death.

4. On thro' the storm he speeds, 'midst drowning cries,
Whilst helpless vessels sink before his eyes.

5. Transfix'd with awe, he feels his God is nigh,
And conscience-stricken, looks on Calvary.

6. The Judgment Day! He hears the trumpet's blast;
And, prostrate, owns his Saviour's love at last.

THE WANDERING JEW.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AGRICOLA AND MOTHER BUNCH.

WITHIN one hour after the different scenes which have just been described, the most profound silence reigned in the soldier's humble dwelling. A flickering light, which played through two panes of glass in a door, betrayed that Mother Bunch had not yet gone to sleep; for her gloomy recess, without air or light, was impenetrable to the rays of day, except by this door, opening upon a narrow and obscure passage connected with the roof. A sorry bed, a table, an old portmanteau, and a chair, so nearly filled this chilling abode that two persons could not possibly be seated within it, unless one of them sat upon the side of the bed.

The magnificent and precious flower

that Agricola had given to the girl was carefully stood up in a vessel of water, placed upon the table on a linen cloth, diffusing its sweet odor around, and expanding its purple calyx in the very closet, whose plastered walls, gray and damp, were feebly lighted by the rays of an attenuated candle. The seamstress, who had taken off no part of her dress, was seated upon her bed—her looks were downcast and her eyes full of tears. She supported herself with one hand resting on the bolster; and, inclining toward the door, listened with painful eagerness, every instant hoping to hear the footstep of Agricola. The heart of the young seamstress beat violently: her face, usually very pale, was now partially flushed—so exciting was the emotion by which she was agitated. Sometimes she cast her eyes with terror upon a letter which she held in her hand, a letter that had been delivered by post in the course of the evening, and which had been placed by the housekeeper (the dyer) upon the table, while she was rendering some trivial domestic services during the recognitions of Dagobert and his family.

After some seconds, Mother Bunch heard a door, very near her own, softly opened.

"There he is at last!" she exclaimed; and Agricola immediately entered.

"I waited till my father went to sleep," said the blacksmith, in a low voice, his physiognomy evincing much more curiosity than uneasiness. "But what is the matter, my good sister? How your countenance is changed! You weep! What has happened? About what danger would you speak to me?"

"Hush! Read this!" said she, her voice trembling with emotion, while she hastily presented to him the open letter. Agricola held it toward the light, and read what follows:

"A person who has reasons for concealing himself, but who knows the sisterly interest you take in the welfare of Agricola Baudoin, warns you. That young and worthy workman will probably be arrested in the course of to-morrow."

"I!" exclaimed Agricola, looking at Mother Bunch with an air of stupefied amazement. "What is the meaning of all this?"

"Read on!" quickly replied the seamstress, clasping her hands.

Agricola resumed reading, scarcely believing the evidence of his eyes:

"The song, entitled 'Workingmen Freed,' has been declared libelous. Numerous copies of it have been found among

the papers of a secret society, the leaders of which are about to be incarcerated, as being concerned in the Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy."

"Alas!" said the girl, melting into tears, "now I see it all. The man who was lurking about below, this evening, who was observed by the dyer, was, doubtless, a spy, lying in wait for your coming home."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Agricola. "This accusation is quite ridiculous! Do not torment yourself. I never trouble myself with politics. My verses breathe nothing but philanthropy. Am I to blame if they have been found among the papers of a secret society?" Agricola disdainfully threw the letter upon the table.

"Read! pray read!" said the other; "read on."

"If you wish it," said Agricola, "I will: no time is lost."

He resumed the reading of the letter.

"A warrant is about to be issued against Agricola Baudoin. There is no doubt of his innocence being sooner or later made clear; but it will be well if he screen himself for a time as much as possible from pursuit, in order that he may escape a confinement of two or three months previous to trial—an imprisonment which would be

a terrible blow for his mother, whose sole support he is.

"A SINCERE FRIEND, who is compelled to remain unknown."

After a moment's silence, the blacksmith raised his head; his countenance resumed its serenity; and laughing, he said: "Reassure yourself, good Mother Bunch, these jokers have made a mistake by trying their games on me. It is plainly an attempt at making an April-fool of me before the time."

"Agricola, for the love of heaven!" said the girl, in a supplicating tone; "treat not the warning thus lightly. Believe in my forebodings, and listen to my advice."

"I tell you again, my good girl," replied Agricola, "that it is two months since my song was published. It is not in any way political; indeed, if it were they would not have waited till now before coming down on me."

"But," said the other, "you forget that new events have arisen. It is scarcely two days since the conspiracy was discovered, in this very neighborhood, in the Rue des Prouvaires. "And," continued she, "if the verses, though perhaps hitherto unnoticed, have now been found in the possession of the persons apprehended for

this conspiracy, nothing more is necessary to compromise you in the plot."

"Compromise me!" said Agricola; "my verses! in which I only praise the love of labor and of goodness! To arrest me for that! If so, justice would be but a blind noodle. That she might grope her way, it would be necessary to furnish her with a dog and a pilgrim's staff to guide her steps."

"Agricola," resumed Mother Bunch, overwhelmed with anxiety and terror on hearing the blacksmith jest at such a moment, "I conjure you to listen to me! No doubt you uphold in the verses the sacred love of labor; but you do also grievously deplore and deprecate the unjust lot of the poor laborers, devoted, as they are, without hope, to all the miseries of life; you recommend, indeed, only fraternity among men; but your good and noble heart vents its indignation, at the same time, against the selfish and the wicked. In fine, you fervently hasten on, with the ardor of your wishes, the emancipation of all the artisans who, less fortunate than you, have not generous M. Hardy for employer. Say, Agricola, in these times of trouble, is there anything more necessary to compromise you than that numerous copies of your

song have been found in possession of the persons who have been apprehended?"

Agricola was moved by these affectionate and judicious expressions of an excellent creature, who reasoned from her heart; and he began to view with more seriousness the advice which she had given him.

Perceiving that she had shaken him, the sewing girl went on to say: "And then, bear your fellow-workman, Remi, in recollection."

"Remi!" said Agricola, anxiously.

"Yes," resumed the seamstress; "a letter of his, a letter in itself quite insignificant, was found in the house of a person arrested last year for conspiracy; and Remi, in consequence, remained a month in prison."

"That is true, but the injustice of his implication was easily shown, and he was set at liberty."

"Yes, Agricola; but not till he had lain a month in prison; and that has furnished the motive of the person who advised you to conceal yourself! A month in prison! Good heavens! Agricola, think of that! and your mother!"

These words made a powerful impression upon Agricola. He took up the letter and again read it attentively.

"And the man who has been lurking all this evening about the house?" proceeded she. "I—constantly recall that circumstance, which cannot be naturally accounted for. Alas! what a blow it would be for your father, and poor mother, who is incapable of earning anything. Are you not now their only resource? Oh! consider, then, what would become of them without you—without your labor!"

"It would indeed be terrible," said Agricola, impatiently casting the letter upon the table. "What you have said concerning Remi is too true. He was as innocent as I am; yet an error of justice, an involuntary error though it be, is not the less cruel. But they don't commit a man without hearing him."

"But they arrest him first, and hear him afterward," said Mother Bunch, bitterly; "and then, after a month or two, they restore him his liberty. And if he have a wife and children, whose only means of living is his daily labor, what becomes of them while their only supporter is in prison? They suffer hunger, they endure cold, and they weep."

At these simple and pathetic words Agricola trembled.

"A month without work," he said, with

a sad and thoughtful air. "And my mother, and father, and the two young ladies who make part of our family until the arrival in Paris of their father, Marshal Simon. Oh! you are right. That thought, in spite of myself, affrights me!"

"Agricola!" exclaimed the girl impetuously; "suppose you apply to M. Hardy; he is so good, and his character is so much esteemed and honored, that, if he offered bail for you, perhaps they would give up their persecution?"

"Unfortunately," replied Agricola, "M. Hardy is absent; he is on a journey with Father Simon."

After a silence of some time, Agricola, striving to surmount his fears, added: "But no! I cannot give credence to this letter. After all, I had rather await what may come. I'll at least have the chance of proving my innocence on my first examination; for indeed, my good sister, whether it be that I am in prison, or that I fly to conceal myself, my working for my family will be equally prevented."

"Alas! that is true," said the poor girl; "what is to be done? Oh, what is to be done?"

"My brave father," said Agricola to himself, "if this misfortune happen to-

morrow, what an awakening it will be for him, who came here to sleep so joyously!" The blacksmith buried his face in his hands.

Unhappily Mother Bunch's fears were too well founded, for it will be recollected that at that epoch of the year 1832, before and after the Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy, a very great number of arrests had been made among the working classes, in consequence of a violent reaction against democratical ideas.

Suddenly, the girl broke the silence which had been maintained for some seconds. A blush colored her features, which bore the impressions of an indefinable expression of constraint, grief, and hope.

"Agricola, you are saved!"

"What say you?" he asked.

"The young lady, so beautiful, so good, who gave you this flower" (she showed it to the blacksmith), "who has made reparation with so much delicacy for having made a painful offer, cannot but have a generous heart. You must apply to her—"

With these words, which seemed to be wrung from her by a violent effort over herself, great tears rolled down her cheeks.

For the first time in her life she experienced a feeling of grievous jealousy. Another woman was so happy as to have the power of coming to the relief of him whom she idolized; while she herself, poor creature, was powerless and wretched.

"Do you think so?" exclaimed Agricola, surprised. "But what could be done with this young lady?"

"Did she not say to you," answered Mother Bunch, "'Remember my name; and in all circumstances address yourself to me'?"

"She did indeed!" replied Agricola.

"This young lady, in her exalted position, ought to have powerful connections who will be able to protect and defend you. Go to her to-morrow morning; tell her frankly what has happened, and request her support."

"But tell me, my good sister, what it is you wish me to do?"

"Listen. I remember that, in former times, my father told us that he had saved one of his friends from being put in prison by becoming surety for him. It will be easy for you so to convince this young lady of your innocence that she will be induced to become surety; and after that, you will have nothing more to fear."

"My poor child," said Agricola, "to ask so great a service from a person to whom one is almost unknown is hard."

"Believe me, Agricola," said the other sadly, "I would never counsel what could possibly lower you in the eyes of any one, and above all—do you understand?—above all, in the eyes of this young lady. I do not propose that you should ask money from her, but only that she should give surety for you, in order that you may have the liberty of continuing at your employment, so that the family may not be without resources. Believe me, Agricola, that such a request is in no respect inconsistent with what is noble and becoming upon your part. The heart of the young lady is generous. She will comprehend your position. The required surety will be as nothing to her; while to you it will be everything, and will even be the very life to those who depend upon you."

"You are right, my good sister," said Agricola, with sadness and dejection. "It is perhaps worth while to risk taking this step. If the young lady consent to render me this service, and if giving surety will indeed preserve me from prison, I shall be prepared for every event. But, no, no!" added he, rising. "I'd never dare to make

the request to her! What right have I to do so? What is the insignificant service that I rendered her, when compared with that which I should solicit from her?"

"Do you imagine then, Agricola, that a generous spirit measures the services which ought to be rendered by those previously received? Trust to me respecting a matter which is an affair of the heart. I am, it is true, but a lowly creature, and ought not to compare myself with any other person. I am nothing, and I can do nothing. Nevertheless, I am sure—yes, Agricola, I am sure—that this young lady, who is so very far above me, will experience the same feelings that I do in this affair; yes, like me, she will at once comprehend that your position is a cruel one; and she will do with joy, with happiness, with thankfulness, that which I would do, if, alas! I could do anything more than uselessly consume myself with regrets."

In spite of herself, she pronounced the last words with an expression so heart-breaking—there was something so moving in the comparison which this unfortunate creature, obscure and disdained, infirm and miserable, made of herself with Adrienne de Cardoville, the very type of resplendent youth, beauty, and opulence—

that Agricola was moved even to tears; and, holding out one of his hands to the speaker, he said to her, tenderly, "How very good you are; how full of nobleness, good feeling, and delicacy!"

"Unhappily," said the weeping girl, "I can do nothing more than advise."

"And your counsels shall be followed out, my sister dear. They are those of a soul the most elevated I have ever known. Yes, you have won me over into making this experiment, by persuading me that the heart of Mademoiselle de Cardoville is perhaps equal in value to your own!"

At this charming and sincere assimilation of herself to Miss Adrienne, the seamstress forgot almost everything she had suffered, so exquisitely sweet and consoling were her emotions. If some poor creatures, fatally devoted to sufferings, experience griefs of which the world knows naught, they sometimes, too, are cheered by humble and timid joys of which the world is equally ignorant. The least word of true tenderness and affection, which elevates them in their own estimation, is ineffably blissful for these unfortunate beings, habitually consigned, not only to hardships and to disdain, but even to desolating doubts, and distrust of themselves.

"Then it is agreed that you will go, to-morrow morning, to this young lady's house?" exclaimed Mother Bunch, trembling with a new-born hope. "And," she quickly added, "at break of day I'll go down to watch at the street-door, to see if there be anything suspicious, and to apprise you of what I perceive."

"Good, excellent girl!" exclaimed Agricola, with increasing emotion.

"It will be necessary to endeavor to set off before the wakening of your father," said the hunchback. "The quarter in which the young lady dwells is so deserted, that the mere going there will almost serve for your present concealment."

"I think I hear the voice of my father," said Agricola, suddenly.

In truth, the little apartment was so near Agricola's garret that he and the seamstress, listening, heard Dagobert say in the dark:

"Agricola, is it thus that you sleep, my boy? Why, my first sleep is over; and my tongue itches deucedly."

"Go quick, Agricola!" said Mother Bunch; "your absence would disquiet him. On no account go out to-morrow morning before I inform you whether or not I shall have seen anything suspicious."

"Why, Agricola, you are not here?" resumed Dagobert, in a louder voice.

"Here I am, father," said the smith, while going out of the seamstress's apartment, and entering the garret to his father.

"I have been to fasten the shutter of a loft that the wind agitated, lest its noise should disturb you."

"Thanks, my boy; but it is not noise that wakes me," said Dagobert, gayly; "it is an appetite, quite furious, for a chat with you. Oh, my dear boy, it is the hungering of a proud old man of a father who has not seen his son for eighteen years."

"Shall I light a candle, father?"

"No, no; that would be luxurious; let us chat in the dark. It will be a new pleasure for me to see you to-morrow morning at daybreak. It will be like seeing you for the first time twice." The door of Agricola's garret being now closed, Mother Bunch heard nothing more.

The poor girl, without undressing, threw herself upon the bed, and closed not an eye during the night, painfully awaiting the appearance of day, in order that she might watch over the safety of Agricola. However, in spite of her vivid anxieties

for the morrow, she sometimes allowed herself to sink into the reveries of a bitter melancholy. She compared the conversation she had just had in the silence of night, with the man whom she secretly adored, with what that conversation might have been, had she possessed some share of charms and beauty—had she been loved as she loved, with a chaste and devoted flame? But soon sinking into belief that she should never know the ravishing sweets of a mutual passion, she found consolation in the hope of being useful to Agricola. At the dawn of day, she rose softly, and descended the staircase with little noise, in order to see if anything menaced Agricola from without.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE AWAKENING.

THE weather, damp and foggy during a portion of the night, became clear and cold toward morning. Through the glazed skylight of Agricola's garret, where he lay with his father, a corner of the blue sky could be seen.

The apartment of the young blacksmith had an aspect as poor as the sewing girl's. For its sole ornament, over the deal table

upon which Agricola wrote his poetical inspirations, there hung suspended from a nail in the wall a portrait of Beranger—that immortal poet whom the people revere and cherish, because his rare and transcendent genius has delighted to enlighten the people, and to sing their glories and their reverses.

Although the day had only begun to dawn, Dagobert and Agricola had already risen. The latter had sufficient self-command to conceal his inquietude, for renewed reflection had again increased his fears.

The recent outbreak in the Rue des Prouvaires had caused a great number of precautionary arrests; and the discovery of numerous copies of Agricola's song in the possession of one of the chiefs of the disconcerted plot, was, in truth, calculated slightly to compromise the young blacksmith. His father, however, as we have already mentioned, suspected not his secret anguish. Seated by the side of his son, upon the edge of their mean little bed, the old soldier, by break of day, had dressed and shaved with military care; he now held between his hands both those of Agricola, his countenance radiant with joy, and unable to discontinue the contemplation of his boy.

"You will laugh at me, my dear boy," said Dagobert to his son; "but I wished the night to the devil, in order that I might gaze upon you in full day, as I now see you. But all in good time; I have lost nothing. Here is another silliness of mine; it delights me to see you wear mustaches. What a splendid horse-grenadier you would have made! Tell me; have you never had a wish to be a soldier?"

"I thought of mother!"

"That's right," said Dagobert; "and besides, I believe, after all, look ye, that the time of the sword has gone by. We old fellows are now good for nothing but to be put in a corner of the chimney. Like rusty old carbines, we have had our day."

"Yes; your days of heroism and of glory," said Agricola with excitement; and then he added, with a voice profoundly softened and agitated, "It is something good and cheering to be your son!"

"As to the good, I know nothing of that," replied Dagobert; "but as for the cheering, it ought to be so; for I love you proudly. And I think this is but the beginning! What say you, Agricola? I am like the famished wretches who have been some days without food. It is but by little and little that they recover themselves,

and can eat. Now, you may expect to be tasted, my boy, morning and evening, and devoured during the day. No, I wish not to think that—not all the day—no, that thought dazzles and perplexes me; and I am no longer myself."

These words of Dagobert caused a painful feeling to Agricola. He believed that they sprung from a presentiment of the separation with which he was menaced.

"Well," continued Dagobert; "you are quite happy; M. Hardy is always good to you."

"Oh!" replied Agricola; "there is none in the world better, or more equitable and generous! If you knew what wonders he has brought about in his factory! Compared to all others, it is a paradise beside the stithies of Lucifer!"

"Indeed!" said Dagobert.

"You shall see," resumed Agricola, "what welfare, what joy, what affection, are displayed upon the countenances of all whom he employs; who work with an ardent pleasure."

"This M. Hardy of yours must be an out-and-out magician," said Dagobert.

"He is, father, a very great magician. He has known how to render labor pleasant and attractive. As for the pleasure,

over and above good wages, he accords to us a portion of his profits according to our deserts; whence you may judge of the eagerness with which we go to work. And that is not all: he has caused large, handsome buildings to be erected, in which all his workpeople find, at less expense than elsewhere, cheerful and salubrious lodgings, in which they enjoy all the advantages of an association. But you shall see—I repeat—you shall see!"

"They have good reason to say that Paris is the region of wonders," observed Dagobert.

"Well, behold me here again at last, never more to quit you, nor good mother!"

"No, father, we will never separate again," said Agricola, stifling a sigh. "My mother and I will both try to make you forget all that you have suffered."

"Suffered!" exclaimed Dagobert, "who the deuce has suffered? Look me well in the face; and see if I have a look of suffering! Bombs and bayonets! Since I have put my foot here, I feel myself quite a young man again! You shall see me march soon; I bet that I tire you out! You must rig yourself up something extra! Lord, how they will stare at us! I wager that in beholding your black mus-

tache and my gray one, folks will say, behold father and son! But let us settle what we are to do with the day. You will write to the father of Marshal Simon, informing him that his granddaughters have arrived, and that it is necessary that he should hasten his return to Paris; for he has charged himself with matters which are of great importance to them. While you are writing, I will go down to say good-morning to my wife, and to the dear little ones. We will then eat a morsel. Your mother will go to mass; for I perceive that she likes to be regular at that: the good soul! no great harm, if it amuse her! and during her absence we will make a raid together."

"Father," said Agricola, with embarrassment, "this morning it is out of my power to accompany you."

"How! out of your power?" said Dagobert; "recollect this is Monday!"

"Yes, father," said Agricola, hesitatingly; "but I have promised to attend all the morning in the workshop, to finish a job that is required in a hurry. If I fail to do so, I shall inflict some injury upon M. Hardy. But I'll soon be at liberty."

"That alters the case," said Dagobert, with a sigh of regret. "I thought to make

my first parade through Paris with you this morning; but it must be deferred in favor of your work. It is sacred; since it is that which sustains your mother. Nevertheless, it is vexatious, devilish vexatious. And yet no—I am unjust. See how quickly one gets habituated to and spoiled by happiness. I grow like a true grumbler at a walk being put off for a few hours! I do this! I who, during eighteen years, have only hoped to see you once more, without daring to reckon very much upon it! Oh! I am but a silly old fool! Vive l'amour et cogni—I mean—my Agricola!" And, to console himself, the old soldier gayly slapped his son's shoulder.

This seemed another omen of evil to the blacksmith; for he dreaded one moment to another lest the fears of Mother Bunch should be realized. "Now that I have recovered myself," said Dagobert, laughing, "let us speak of business. Know you where I can find the addresses of all the notaries in Paris?"

"I don't know; but nothing is more easy than to discover it."

"My reason is,' resumed Dagobert, "that I sent from Russia by post, and by order of the mother of the two children that I have brought here, some important

papers to a Parisian notary. As it was my duty to see this notary immediately upon my arrival, I had written his name and his address in a portfolio, of which, however, I have been robbed during my journey; and as I have forgotten his devil of a name, it seems to me, that if I should see it again in the list of notaries, I might recollect it."

Two knocks at the door of the garret made Agricola start. He involuntarily thought of a warrant for his apprehension.

His father, who at the sound of the knocking turned round his head, had not perceived his emotion, and said with a loud voice: "Come in!" The door opened. It was Gabriel. He wore a black cassock and a broad-brimmed hat.

To recognize his brother by adoption, and to throw himself into his arms, were two movements performed at once by Agricola—as quick as thought. "My brother!" exclaimed Agricola.

"Agricola!" cried Gabriel.

"Gabriel!" responded the blacksmith.

"After so long an absence!" said the one.

"To behold you again!" rejoined the other.

Such were the words exchanged between

the blacksmith and the missionary, while they were locked in a close embrace.

Dagobert, moved and charmed by these fraternal endearments, felt his eyes become moist. There was something truly touching in the affection of the young men —in their hearts so much alike, and yet of characters and aspects so very different— for the manly countenance of Agricola contrasted strongly with the delicacy and angelic physiognomy of Gabriel.

"I was forewarned by my father of your arrival," said the blacksmith, at length. "I have been expecting to see you; and my happiness has been a hundred times the greater, because I have had all the pleasures of hoping for it."

"And my good mother?" asked Gabriel, in affectionately grasping the hands of Dagobert. "I trust that you have found her in good health."

"Yes, my brave boy!" replied Dagobert; "and her health will have become a hundred times better, now that we are all together. Nothing is so healthful as joy." Then addressing himself to Agricola, who, forgetting his fear of being arrested, regarded the missionary with an expression of ineffable affection, Dagobert added:

"Let it be remembered, that, with the

soft cheek of a young girl, Gabriel has the courage of a lion; I have already told with what intrepidity he saved the lives of Marshal Simon's daughters, and tried to save mine also."

"But, Gabriel! what has happened to your forehead?" suddenly exclaimed Agricola, who for a few seconds had been attentively examining the missionary.

Gabriel, having thrown aside his hat on entering, was now directly beneath the skylight of the garret apartment, the bright light through which shone upon his sweet, pale countenance: and the round scar, which extended from one eyebrow to the other, was therefore distinctly visible.

In the midst of the powerful and diversified emotions, and of the exciting events which so rapidly followed the shipwreck on the rocky coast near Cardoville House, Dagobert, during the short interview he then had with Gabriel, had not perceived the scar which seamed the forehead of the young missionary. Now, partaking, however, of the surprise of his son, Dagobert said:

"Ay, indeed! how came this scar upon your brow?"

"And on his hands too; see, dear father!" exclaimed the blacksmith, with

renewed surprise, while he seized one of the hands which the young priest held out toward him in order to tranquilize his fears.

"Gabriel, my brave boy, explain this to us!" added Dagobert; "who has wounded you thus?" and in his turn, taking the other hand of the missionary, he examined the scar upon it with the eye of a judge of wounds, and then added, "In Spain, one of my comrades was found and taken down alive from a cross, erected at the junction of several roads, upon which the monks had crucified, and left him to die of hunger, thirst, and agony. Ever afterward he bore scars upon his hands, exactly similar to this upon your hand."

"My father is right!" exclaimed Agricola. "It is evident that your hands have been pierced through! My poor brother!" and Agricola became grievously agitated.

"Do not think about it," said Gabriel, reddening with the embarrassment of modesty. "Having gone as a missionary among the savages of the Rocky Mountains, they crucified me, and they had begun to scalp me, when Providence snatched me from their hands."

"Unfortunate youth," said Dagobert; "without arms, then? You had not a sufficient escort for your protection?"

"It is not for such as me to carry arms," said Gabriel, sweetly smiling; "and we are never accompanied by any escort."

"Well, but your companions, those who were along with you, how came it that they did not defend you?" impetuously asked Agricola.

"I was alone, my dear brother."

"Alone!"

"Yes, alone; without even a guide."

"You alone! unarmed! in a barbarous country!" exclaimed Dagobert, scarcely crediting a step so unmilitary, and almost distrusting his own sense of hearing.

"It was sublime!" said the young blacksmith and poet.

"The Christian faith," said Gabriel, with mild simplicity, "cannot be implanted by force or violence. It is only by the power of persuasion that the Gospel can be spread among poor savages."

"But when persuasions fail?" said Agricola.

"Why, then, dear brother, one has but to die for the belief that is in him, pitying those who have rejected it, and who have refused the blessings it offers to mankind."

There was a period of profound silence after the reply of Gabriel, which was uttered with simple and touching pathos.

Dagobert was in his own nature too courageous not to comprehend a heroism thus calm and resigned; and the old soldier, as well as his son, now contemplated Gabriel with the most earnest feelings of mingled admiration and respect.

Gabriel, entirely free from the affectation of false modesty, seemed quite unconscious of the emotions which he had excited in the breasts of his two friends; and he therefore said to Dagobert, "What ails you?"

"What ails me!" exclaimed the brave old soldier, with great emotion. "After having been for thirty years in the wars, I had imagined myself to be about as courageous as any man. And now I find I have a master! And that master is yourself!"

"I!" said Gabriel: "what do you mean? What have I done?"

"Thunder, don't you know that the brave wounds there" (the veteran took with transport both of Gabriel's hands), "that these wounds are as glorious—are more glorious—than ours—than all ours, as warriors by profession!"

"Yes! yes! my father speaks truth!" exclaimed Agricola; and he added, with enthusiasm, "Oh, for such priests! How

I love them! How I venerate them! How I am elevated by their charity, their courage, their resignation!"

"I entreat you not to extol me thus," said Gabriel, with embarrassment.

"Not extol you!" replied Dagobert. "Hanged if I shouldn't. When I have gone into the heat of action, did I rush into it alone? Was I not under the eyes of my commanding officer? Were not my comrades there along with me? In default of true courage, had I not the instinct of self-preservation to spur me on, without reckoning the excitement of the shouts and tumult of battle, the smell of the gunpowder, the flourishes of the trumpets, the thundering of the cannon, the ardor of my horse, which bounded beneath me as if the devil were at his tail? Need I state that I also knew that the Emperor was present, with his eye upon every one—the Emperor, who, in recompense for a hole being made in my tough hide, would give me a bit of lace or a ribbon, as plaster for the wound. Thanks to all these causes, I passed for game. Fair enough! But are you not a thousand times more game than I, my brave boy; going alone, unarmed, to confront enemies a hundred times more ferocious than those whom we attacked—we.

who fought in whole squadrons, supported by artillery, bombshells, and case-shot?"

"Excellent father!" cried Agricola, "how noble of you to render to Gabriel this justice!"

"Oh, dear brother," said Gabriel, "his kindness to me makes him magnify what was quite natural and simple!"

"Natural!" said the veteran soldier; "yes, natural for gallants who have hearts of the true temper; but that temper is rare."

"Oh, yes, very rare," said Agricola; "for that kind of courage is the most admirable of all. Most bravely did you seek almost certain death, alone, bearing the cross in hand as your only weapon, to preach charity and Christian brotherhood. They seized you, tortured you; and you await death and partly endure it, without complaint, without remonstrance, without hatred, without anger, without a wish for vengeance; forgiveness issuing from your mouth, and a smile of pity beaming upon your lips; and this in the depths of forests, where no one could witness your magnanimity—none could behold you—and without other desire, after you were rescued, than modestly to conceal blessed wounds under your black robe! My father is

right, by Jove! can you still contend that you are not as brave as he?"

"And, besides, too," resumed Dagobert, "the dear boy did all that for a thankless pay-master; for it is true, Agricola, that his wounds will never change his humble black robe of a priest into the rich robe of a bishop!"

"I am not so disinterested as I may seem to be," said Gabriel to Dagobert, smiling meekly. "If I am deemed worthy, a great recompense awaits me on high."

"As to all that, my boy," said Dagobert, "I do not understand it; and I will not argue about it. I maintain it, that my old cross of honor would be at least as deservedly affixed to your cassock as upon my uniform."

"But these recompenses are never conferred upon humble priests like Gabriel," said Agricola, "and if you did know, dear father, how much virtue and valor is among those whom the highest orders in the priesthood insolently call the inferior clergy—the unseen merit and the blind devotedness to be found among worthy, but obscure, country curates, who are inhumanly treated and subjugated to a pitiless yoke by the lordly lawnsleeves! Like us, those poor priests are worthy laborers in

their vocation; and for them, also, all generous hearts ought to demand enfranchisement! Sons of common people, like ourselves, and useful as we are, justice ought to be rendered both to them and to us. Do I say right, Gabriel? You will not contradict it; for you have told me that your ambition would have been to obtain a small country curacy; because you understand the good that you could work within it."

"My desire is still the same," said Gabriel sadly; "but, unfortunately—" and then, as if he wished to escape from a painful thought, and to change the conversation, he, addressing himself to Dagobert, added: "Believe me: be more just than to undervalue your own courage by exalting mine. Your courage must be very great—very great; for, after a battle, the spectacle of the carnage must be truly terrible to a generous and feeling heart. We, at least, though we may be killed, do not kill!"

At these words of the missionary, the soldier drew himself up erect, looked upon Gabriel with astonishment, and said, "This is most surprising!"

"What is?" inquired Agricola.

"What Gabriel has just told us," replied Dagobert, "brings to my mind what I ex-

perienced in warfare on the battlefield in proportion as I advanced in years. Listen, my children: more than once, on the night after a general engagement, I have been mounted as a vedette—alone—by night—by the moonlight, on the field of battle which remained in our possession, and upon which lay the bodies of seven or eight thousand of the slain, among whom were mingled the slaughtered remains of some of my old comrades: and then this sad scene, when the profound silence has restored me to my senses from the thirst for bloodshed and the delirious whirling of my sword (intoxicated like the rest), I have said to myself, 'For what have these men been killed? — FOR WHAT — FOR WHAT?' But this feeling, well understood as it was, hindered me not, on the following morning, when the trumpets again sounded the charge, from rushing once more to the slaughter. But the same thought always recurred when my arm became weary with carnage; and after wiping my saber upon the mane of my horse, I have said to myself, 'I have killed!—killed!! killed!!! and, FOR WHAT!!!' "

The missionary and the blacksmith exchanged looks on hearing the old soldier give utterance to this singular retrospection of the past.

"Alas!" said Gabriel to him, "all generous hearts feel as you did during the solemn moments, when the intoxication of glory has subsided, and man is left alone to the influence of the good instincts planted in his bosom."

"And that should prove, my brave boy," rejoined Dagobert, "that you are greatly better than I; for those noble instincts, as you call them, have never abandoned you. —But how the deuce did you escape from the claws of the infuriated savages who had already crucified you?"

At this question of Dagobert, Gabriel started and reddened so visibly that the soldier said to him: "If you ought not to, or cannot answer my request, let us say no more about it."

"I have nothing to conceal, either from you or from my brother," replied the missionary with altered voice. "Only it will be difficult for me to make you comprehend what I cannot comprehend myself."

"How is that?" asked Agricola with surprise.

"Surely," said Gabriel, reddening more deeply, "I must have been deceived by a fallacy of my senses, during that abstracted moment in which I awaited death with resignation. My enfeebled mind, in spite

of me, must have been cheated by an illusion; or that, which to the present hour has remained inexplicable, would have been more slowly developed; and I should have known with greater certainty that it was the strange woman—"

Dagobert, while listening to the missionary, was perfectly amazed; for he also had vainly tried to account for the unexpected succor which had freed him and the two orphans from the prison at Leipsic.

"Of what woman do you speak?" asked Agricola.

"Of her who saved me," was the reply.

"A woman saved you from the hands of the savages!" said Dagobert.

"Yes," replied Gabriel, though absorbed in his reflections, "a woman, young and beautiful!"

"And who was this woman?" asked Agricola.

"I know not. When I asked her, she replied, 'I am the sister of the distressed!' "

"And whence came she? Whither went she?" asked Dagobert, singularly interested.

" 'I go wheresoever there is suffering,' she replied," answered the missionary; "and she departed, going toward the north

of America—toward those desolate regions in which there is eternal snow, where the nights are without end."

"As in Siberia," said Dagobert, who had become very thoughtful.

"But," resumed Agricola, addressing himself to Gabriel, who seemed also to have become more and more absorbed, "in what manner or by what means did this woman come to your assistance?"

. . . . . .

The missionary was about to reply to the last question, when there was heard a gentle tap at the door of the garret apartment, which renewed the fears that Agricola had forgotten since the arrival of his adopted brother. "Agricola," said a sweet voice outside the door, "I wish to speak with you as soon as possible."

The blacksmith recognized Mother Bunch's voice, and opened the door. But the young seamstress, instead of entering, drew back into the dark passage, and said, with a voice of anxiety: "Agricola, it is an hour since broad day, and you have not yet departed! How imprudent! I have been watching below, in the street, until now, and have seen nothing alarming; but they may come any instant to arrest you. Hasten, I conjure you, your

departure for the abode of Mademoiselle de Cardoville. Not a minute should be lost."

"Had it not been for the arrival of Gabriel I should have been gone. But I could not resist the happiness of remaining some little time with him."

"Gabriel here!" said Mother Bunch, with sweet surprise; for, as has been stated, she had been brought up with him and Agricola.

"Yes," answered Agricola, "for half-an-hour he has been with my father and me."

"What happiness I shall have in seeing him again," said the sewing girl. "He doubtless came upstairs while I had gone for a brief space to your mother, to ask if I could be useful in any way on account of the young ladies; but they have been so fatigued that they still sleep. Your mother has requested me to give you this letter for your father. She has just received it."

"Thanks."

"Well," resumed Mother Bunch, "now that you have seen Gabriel, do not delay long. Think what a blow it would be for your father, if they came to arrest you in his very presence—*mon Dieu!*"

"You are right," said Agricola; "it is indispensable that I should depart—while near Gabriel, in spite of my anxiety, my fears were forgotten."

"Go quickly, then; and if Mademoiselle de Cardoville should grant this favor, perhaps in a couple of hours you will return, quite at ease both as to yourself and us."

"True! a very few minutes more, and I'll come down."

"I return to watch at the door. If I perceive anything, I'll come up again to apprise you. But, pray, do not delay."

"Be easy, good sister." Mother Bunch hurriedly descended the staircase, to resume her watch at the street door, and Agricola re-entered his garret. "Dear father," he said to Dagobert, "my mother has just received this letter, and she requests you to read it."

"Very well; read it for me, my boy." And Agricola read as follows:

"MADAME—I understand that your husband has been charged by General Simon with an affair of very great importance. Will you, as soon as your husband arrives in Paris, request him to come to my office at Chartres without a moment's delay. I am instructed to deliver

to himself, and to no other person, some documents indispensable to the interests of General Simon.

"DURAND, Notary at Chartres."

Dagobert looked at his son with astonishment, and said to him, "Who can have told this gentleman already of my arrival in Paris?"

"Perhaps, father," said Agricola, "this is the notary to whom you transmitted some papers, and whose address you have lost."

"But his name was not Durand; and I distinctly recollect that his address was Paris, not Chartres. And, besides," said the soldier, thoughtfully, "if he has some important documents, why didn't he transmit them to me?"

"It seems to me that you ought not to neglect going to him as soon as possible," said Agricola, secretly rejoiced that this circumstance would withdraw his father for about two days, during which time his (Agricola's) fate would be decided in one way or other.

"Your counsel is good," replied his father.

"This thwarts your intentions in some degree?" asked Gabriel.

"Rather, my lads; for I counted upon passing the day with you. However, 'duty before everything.' Having come happily from Siberia to Paris, it is not for me to fear a journey from Paris to Chartres, when it is required on an affair of importance. In twice twenty-four hours I shall be back again. But the deuce take me if I expected to leave Paris for Chartres to-day. Luckily, I leave Rose and Blanche with my good wife; and Gabriel, their angel, as they call him, will be here to keep them company."

"That is, unfortunately, impossible," said the missionary, sadly. "This visit on my arrival is also a farewell visit."

"A farewell visit! Now!" exclaimed Dagobert and Agricola both at once.

"Alas, yes!"

"You start already on another mission?" said Dagobert; "surely it is not possible?"

"I must answer no question upon this subject," said Gabriel, suppressing a sigh; "but from now, for some time, I cannot, and ought not to, come again into this house."

"Why, my brave boy," resumed Dagobert with emotion, "there is something in thy conduct that savors of constraint, of

oppression. I know something of men. He you call superior, whom I saw for some moments after the shipwreck at Cardoville Castle, has a bad look; and I am sorry to see you enrolled under such a commander."

"At Cardoville Castle!" exclaimed Agricola, struck with the identity of the name with that of the young lady of the golden hair; "was it in Cardoville Castle that you were received after your shipwreck?"

"Yes, my boy; why does that astonish you?" asked Dagobert.

"Nothing, father; but were the owners of the castle there at the time?"

"No; for the steward, when I applied to him for an opportunity to return thanks for the kind hospitality we had experienced, informed me that the person to whom the house belonged was resident at Paris."

"What a singular coincidence," thought Agricola, "if the young lady should be the proprietor of the dwelling which bears her name!"

This reflection having recalled to Agricola the promise which he had made to Mother Bunch, he said to Dagobert: "Dear father, excuse me; but it is already late, and I ought to be in the workshop by eight o'clock."

"That is too true, my boy. Let us go. This party is adjourned till my return from Chartres. Embrace me once more, and take care of yourself."

Since Dagobert had spoken of constraint and oppression to Gabriel, the latter had continued pensive. At the moment when Agricola approached him to shake hands, and to bid him adieu, the missionary said to him solemnly, with a grave voice, and in a tone of decision that astonished both the blacksmith and the soldier: "My dear brother, one word more. I have come here to say to you also, that within a few days hence I shall have need of you; and of you also, my father (permit me so to call you)," added Gabriel, with emotion, as he turned round to Dagobert.

"How! you speak thus to us!" exclaimed Agricola; "what is the matter?"

"Yes," replied Gabriel, "I need the advice and assistance of two men of honor—of two men of resolution; and I can reckon upon you two—can I not? At any hour, on whatever day it may be, upon a word from me, will you come?"

Dagobert and his son regarded each other in silence, astonished at the accents of the missionary. Agricola felt an oppression of the heart. If he should be a

prisoner when his brother should require his assistance, what could be done?

"At every hour, by night or by day, my brave boy, you may depend upon us," said Dagobert, as much surprised as interested —"You have a father and a brother; make your own use of them."

"Thanks, thanks," said Gabriel, "you set me quite at ease."

"I'll tell you what," resumed the soldier, "were it not for your priest's robe, I should believe, from the manner in which you have spoken to us, that you are about to be engaged in a duel—in a mortal combat."

"In a duel?" said Gabriel, starting. "Yes; it may be a duel—uncommon and fearful—at which it is necessary to have two witnesses such as you—A FATHER and A BROTHER!"

. . . . . .

Some instants afterward, Agricola, whose anxiety was continually increasing, set off in haste for the dwelling of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, to which we now beg leave to take the reader.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PAVILION.

DIZIER HOUSE was one of the largest and handsomest in the Rue Babylone, in Paris. Nothing could be more severe, more imposing, or more depressing than the aspect of this old mansion. Several immense windows, filled with small squares of glass, painted a grayish white, increased the somber effect of the massive layers of huge stones, blackened by time, of which the fabric was composed.

This dwelling bore a resemblance to all the others that had been erected in the same quarter toward the middle of the last century. It was surmounted in front by a pediment: it had an elevated ground-floor which was reached from the outside by a circular flight of broad stone steps. One of the fronts looked on an immense courtyard, on each side of which an arcade led to the vast inferior apartments. The other front overlooked the garden, or rather park, of twelve or fifteen roods; and, on this side, wings, approaching the principal part of the structure, formed a couple of lateral galleries. Like nearly all

on which were planted here and there gigantic clumps of verdant trees.

The following scene occurred at this residence on the morning following that of the arrival of Dagobert, with the daughters of Marshal Simon, in the Rue Brise-Miche. The hour of eight had sounded from the steeple of a neighboring church; a brilliant winter sun arose to brighten a pure blue sky behind the tall leafless trees which in summer formed a dome of verdure over the summer-house. The door in the vestibule opened, and the rays of the morning sun beamed upon a charming creature, or rather upon two charming creatures, for the second one, though filling a modest place in the scale of creation, was not less distinguished by a beauty of its own, which was very striking. In plain terms, two individuals, one of them a young girl, and the other a tiny English dog, of great beauty, of that breed of spaniels called King Charles's, made their appearance under the peristyle of the rotunda. The name of the young girl was Georgette; the beautiful little spaniel's was Frisky. Georgette was in her eighteenth year. Never had Florine or Manton, never had a lady's maid of Marivaux, a more mischievous face, an eye more quick, a smile

Secure he stands, and fearless gazes round,
Where arrows fall and corpses strew the ground.

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the other great habitations of this quarter, there might be seen at the extremity of the garden what the owners and occupiers of each called the lesser mansion.

This extension was a Pompadour summer house, built in the form of a rotunda, with the charming though incorrect taste of the era of its erection. It presented, in every part where it was possible for the stones to be cut, a profusion of endives, knots of ribbons, garlands of flowers, and chubby cupids. This pavilion, inhabited by Adrienne de Cardoville, was composed of a ground-floor, which was reached by a peristyle of several steps. A small vestibule led to a circular hall, lighted from the roof. Four principal apartments met here; and ranges of smaller rooms, concealed in the upper story, served for minor purposes.

These dependencies of great habitations are in our days disused, or transformed into irregular conservatories; but, by an uncommon exception, the black exterior of the pavilion had been scraped and renewed, and the entire structure repaired. The white stones of which it was built glistened like Parian marble; and its renovated, coquettish aspect contrasted singularly with the gloomy mansion seen at the other extremity of an extensive lawn,

more roguish, teeth more white, cheeks more roseate, figure more coquettish, feet smaller, or form smarter, attractive, and enticing. Though it was yet very early, Georgette was carefully and tastefully dressed. A tiny Valenciennes cap, with flaps and flap-band, of half-peasant fashion, decked with rose-colored ribbons, and stuck a little backward upon bands of beautiful hair, surrounded her fresh and piquant face, a robe of gray levantine, and a cambric neckerchief, fastened to her bosom by a large tuft of rose-colored ribbons, displayed her figure, elegantly rounded; a hollands apron, white as snow, trimmed below by three large hems surmounted by a Vandyke-row, encircled her waist, which was as round and flexible as a reed; her short, plain sleeves, edged with bone-lace, allowed her plump arms to be seen, which her long Swedish gloves, reaching to the elbow, defended from the rigor of the cold. When Georgette raised the bottom of her dress, in order to descend more quickly the steps, she exhibited to Frisky's indifferent eyes a beautiful ankle, and the beginning of the plump calf of a fine leg, incased in white silk, and a charming little foot, in a laced half-boot of Turkish satin. When a blonde like

Georgette sets herself to be ensnaring; when vivid glances sparkle from her eyes of bright yet tender blue; when a joyous excitement suffuses her transparent skin, she is more resistless for the conquest of everything before her than a brunette.

This bewitching and nimble lady's maid, who on the previous evening had introduced Agricola to the pavilion, was first waiting-woman to the Honorable Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville, niece of the Princess Saint-Dizier.

Frisky, so happily found and brought back by the blacksmith, uttered weak but joyful barks, and bounded, ran, and frolicked upon the turf. She was not much bigger than one's fist; her curled hair, of lustrous black, shone like ebony, under the broad, red satin ribbon which encircled her neck; her paws, fringed with long silken fur, were of a bright and fiery tan, as well as her muzzle, the nose of which was inconceivably pug; her large eyes were full of intelligence; and her curly ears so long that they trailed upon the ground. Georgette seemed to be as brisk and petulant as Frisky, and shared her sportiveness—now scampering after the happy little spaniel, and now retreating, in order to be pursued upon the green

sward in her turn. All at once, at the sight of a second person, who advanced with deliberate gravity, Georgette and Frisky were suddenly stopped in their diversion. The little King Charles, some steps in advance of Georgette, faithful to her name, and bold as the devil, held herself firmly upon her nervous paws, and fiercely awaited the coming up of the enemy, displaying at the same time rows of little teeth, which, though of ivory, were none the less pointed and sharp. The enemy consisted of a woman of mature age, accompanied by a very fat dog, of the color of coffee and milk; his tail was twisted like a corkscrew; he was pot-bellied; his skin was sleek; his neck was turned a little to one side; he walked with his legs inordinately spread out, and stepped with the air of a doctor. His black muzzle, quarrelsome and scowling, showed two fangs sallying forth, and turning up from the left side of the mouth; and altogether he had an expression singularly forbidding and vindictive. This disagreeable animal, a perfect type of what might be called "a churchgoer's pug," answered to the name of "My Lord." His mistress, a woman of about fifty years of age, corpulent and of middle size, was

dressed in a costume as gloomy and severe as that of Georgette was gay and showy. It consisted of a brown robe, a black silk mantle, and a hat of the same dye. The features of this woman might have been agreeable in her youth, and her florid cheeks, her correct eyebrows, her black eyes, which were still very lively, scarcely accorded with the peevish and austere physiognomy which she tried to assume. This matron, of slow and discreet gait, was Madame Augustine Grivois, first woman to the Princess Saint-Dizier. Not only did the age, the face, and the dress of these two women present a striking contrast; but the contrast extended itself even to the animals which attended them. There were similar differences between Frisky and My Lord, as between Georgette and Mrs. Grivois. When the latter perceived the little King Charles, she could not restrain a movement of surprise and repugnance, which escaped not the notice of the young lady's maid. Frisky, who had not retreated one inch since the apparition of My Lord, regarded him valiantly, with a look of defiance, and even advanced toward him with an air so decidedly hostile that the cur, though twice as big as the little King Charles, uttered a howl of distress and

terror, and sought refuge behind Mrs. Grivois, who bitterly said to Georgette,

"It seems to me, miss, that you might dispense with exciting your dog thus, and setting him upon mine."

"It was, doubtless, for the purpose of protecting this respectable but ugly animal from similar alarms, that you tried to make us lose Frisky yesterday, by driving her into the street through the little garden gate. But fortunately an honest young man found Frisky in the Rue de Babylone, and brought her back to my mistress. However," continued Georgette, "to what, madame, do I owe the pleasure of seeing you this morning?"

"I am commanded by the princess," replied Mrs. Grivois, unable to conceal a smile of triumphant satisfaction, "immediately to see Mademoiselle Adrienne. It regards a very important affair, which I am to communicate only to herself."

At these words Georgette became purple, and could not repress a slight start of disquietude, which happily escaped Grivois, who was occupied with watching over the safety of her pet, whom Frisky continued to snarl at with a very menacing aspect; and Georgette, having quickly overcome her temporary emotion, firmly answered:

"Mademoiselle Adrienne went to rest very late last night. She has forbidden me to enter her apartment before midday."

"That is very possible; but as the present business is to obey an order of the princess her aunt, you will do well if you please, miss, to awaken your mistress immediately."

"My mistress is subject to no one's orders in her own house; and I will not disturb her till midday, in pursuance of her commands," replied Georgette.

"Then I shall go myself," said Mrs. Grivois.

"Florine and Hebe will not admit you. Indeed, here is the key of the saloon: and through the saloon only can the apartments of Mademoiselle Adrienne be entered."

"How! do you dare refuse me permission to execute the orders of the princess?"

"Yes; I dare to commit the great crime of being unwilling to awaken my mistress!"

"Ah! such are the results of the blind affection of the princess for her niece," said the matron, with affected grief: "Mademoiselle Adrienne no longer respects her aunt's orders; and she is surrounded by young hare-brained persons, who, from the first dawn of morning, dress themselves out as if for ball-going."

"Oh, madame! how came you to revile dress, who were formerly the greatest coquette and the most frisky and fluttering of all the princess's women. At least, that is what is still spoken of you in the hotel, as having been handed down from time out of mind, by generation to generation, even unto ours!"

"How! from generation to generation! do you mean to insinuate that I am a hundred years old, Miss Impertinence?"

"I speak of the generations of waiting-women; for, except you, it is the utmost if they remain two or three years in the princess's house, who has too many tempers for the poor girls!"

"I forbid you to speak thus of my mistress, whose name some people ought not to pronounce but on their knees."

"However," said Georgette, "if one wished to speak ill of—"

"Do you dare!"

"No longer ago than last night, at half-past eleven o'clock—"

"Last night?"

"A four-wheeler," continued Georgette, "stopped at a few paces from the house. A mysterious personage, wrapped up in a cloak, alighted from it, and directly tapped, not at the door, but on the glass of the

porter's lodge window; and at one o'clock in the morning, the cab was still stationed in the street, waiting for the mysterious personage in the cloak, who, doubtless, during all that time, was, as you say, pronouncing the name of her highness the princess on his knees."

Whether Mrs. Grivois had not been instructed as to a visit made to the Princess Saint-Dizier by Rodin (for he was the man in the cloak) in the middle of the night, after he had become certain of the arrival in Paris of General Simon's daughters; or whether Mrs. Grivois thought it necessary to appear ignorant of the visit, she replied, shrugging her shoulders disdainfully: "I know not what you mean, mademoiselle. I have not come here to listen to your impertinent stuff. Once again I ask you—will you, or will you not, introduce me to the presence of Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"I repeat, madame, that my mistress sleeps, and that she has forbidden me to enter her bed-chamber before midday."

This conversation took place at some distance from the summer-house, at a spot from which the peristyle could be seen at the end of a grand avenue, terminating in trees arranged in form of a V. All at once Mrs. Grivois, extending her hand in

that direction, exclaimed: "Great heavens! is it possible? what have I seen?"

"What have you seen?" said Georgette, turning round.

"What have I seen?" repeated Mrs. Grivois, with amazement.

"Yes: what was it?"

"Mademoiselle Adrienne."

"Where?" asked Georgette.

"I saw her run up the porch steps. I perfectly recognized her by her gait, by her hat, and by her mantle. To come home at eight o'clock in the morning!" cried Mrs. Grivois: "it is perfectly incredible!"

"See my lady? Why, you came to see her!" and Georgette burst out into fits of laughter; and then said: "Oh! I understand! you wish to out-do my story of the four-wheeler last night! It is very neat of you!"

"I repeat," said Mrs. Grivois, "that I have this moment seen—"

"Oh! have done, Mrs. Grivois: if you speak seriously, you are mad!"

"I am mad, am I? because I have a pair of good eyes! The little gate that opens on the street lets one into the *quincunx* near the pavilion. It is by that door,

doubtless, that mademoiselle has re-entered. Oh, what shameful conduct! what will the princess say to it! Ah! her presentiments have not yet been mistaken. See to what her weak indulgence of her niece's caprices has led her! It is monstrous!—so monstrous, that, though I have seen her with my own eyes, still I can scarcely believe it!"

"Since you've gone so far, ma'am, I now insist upon conducting you into the apartment of my lady, in order that you may convince yourself, by your own senses, that your eyes have deceived you!"

"Oh, you are very cunning, my dear, but not more cunning than I! You propose my going now! Yes, yes, I believe you: you are certain that by this time I shall find her in her apartment!"

"But, madame, I assure you—"

"All that I can say to you is this: that neither you, nor Florine, nor Hebe, shall remain here twenty-four hours. The princess will put an end to this horrible scandal; for I shall immediately inform her of what has passed. To go out in the night! Re-enter at eight o'clock in the morning! Why, I am all in a whirl! Certainly, if I had not seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed it! Still, it is only what

was to be expected. It will astonish nobody. Assuredly not! All those to whom I am going to relate it will say, I am quite sure, that it is not at all astonishing! Oh! what a blow to our respectable princess! What a blow for her!"

Mrs. Grivois returned precipitately toward the mansion, followed by her fat pug, who appeared to be as imbittered as herself.

Georgette, active and light, ran, on her part, toward the pavilion, in order to apprise Mademoiselle de Cardoville that Mrs. Grivois had seen her, or fancied she had seen her, furtively enter by the little garden gate.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ADRIENNE AT HER TOILET.

About an hour had elapsed since Mrs. Grivois had seen or pretended to have seen Adrienne de Cardoville re-enter in the morning the extension of Saint-Dizier House.

It is for the purpose, not of excusing, but of rendering intelligible, the following scenes, that it is deemed necessary to bring out into the light some striking peculiari-

ties in the truly original character of Mademoiselle de Cardoville.

This originality consisted in an excessive independence of mind, joined to a natural horror of whatsoever is repulsive or deformed, and to an insatiable desire of being surrounded by everything attractive and beautiful. The painter most delighted with coloring and beauty, the sculptor most charmed by proportions of form, feel not more than Adrienne did the noble enthusiasm which the view of perfect beauty always excites in the chosen favorites of nature.

And it was not only the pleasures of sight which this young lady loved to gratify: the harmonious modulations of song, the melody of instruments, the cadences of poetry, afforded her infinite pleasures; while a harsh voice or a discordant noise made her feel the same painful impression, or one nearly as painful, as that which she involuntarily experienced from the sight of a hideous object. Passionately fond of flowers, too, and of their sweet scents, there are some perfumes which she enjoyed equally with the delights of music or those of plastic beauty. It is necessary, alas, to acknowledge one enormity: Adrienne was dainty in her food! She valued

more than any one else the fresh pulp of handsome fruit, the delicate savor of a golden pheasant, cooked to a turn, and the odorous cluster of a generous vine.

But Adrienne enjoyed all these pleasures with an exquisite reserve. She sought religiously to cultivate and refine the senses given her. She would have deemed it black ingratitude to blunt those divine gifts by excesses, or to debase them by unworthy selections of objects upon which to exercise them: a fault from which, indeed, she was preserved by the excessive and imperious delicacy of her taste.

The BEAUTIFUL and the UGLY occupied for her the places which GOOD and EVIL hold for others.

Her devotion to grace, elegance, and physical beauty had led her also to the adoration of moral beauty, for if the expression of a low and bad passion renders uncomely the most beautiful countenances, those which are in themselves the most ugly are ennobled, on the contrary, by the expression of good feelings and generous sentiments.

In a word, Adrienne was the most complete, the most ideal personification of SENSUALITY — not of vulgar, ignorant, non-intelligent, mistaken sensuousness,

which is always deceitful and corrupted by habit or by the necessity for gross and ill-regulated enjoyments, but that exquisite sensuality which is to the senses what intelligence is to the soul.

The independence of this young lady's character was extreme. Certain humiliating subjections imposed upon her success by its social position, above all things were revolting to her, and she had the hardihood to resolve to withdraw herself from them. She was a woman, the most womanish that it is possible to imagine—a woman in her timidity as well as in her audacity—a woman in her hatred of the brutal despotism of men, as well as in her intense disposition to self-devoting herself, madly even and blindly, to him who should merit such a devotion from her—a woman whose piquant wit was occasionally paradoxical—a superior woman, in brief, who entertained a well-grounded disdain and contempt for certain men either placed very high or greatly adulated, whom she had from time to time met in the drawing-room of her aunt, the Princess Saint-Dizier, when she resided with her.

These indispensable explanations being given, we usher the reader into the presence of Adrienne de Cardoville, who had just come out of the bath.

It would require all the brilliant colorings of the Venetian school to represent that charming scene, which would rather seem to have occurred in the sixteenth century, in some palace of Florence or Bologna, than in Paris, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in the month of February, 1832.

Adrienne's dressing-room was a kind of miniature temple, seemingly one erected and dedicated to the worship of beauty, in gratitude to the Maker who has lavished so many charms upon woman, not to be neglected by her, or to cover and conceal them with ashes, or to destroy them by the contact of her person with sordid and harsh haircloth; but in order that, with fervent gratitude for the divine gifts wherewith she is endowed, she may enhance her charms with all the illusions of grace and all the splendors of apparel, so as to glorify the divine work of her own perfections in the eyes of all. Daylight was admitted into this semi-circular apartment through one of those double windows, contrived for the preservation of heat, so happily imported from Germany. The walls of the pavilion being constructed of stone of great thickness, the depth of the aperture for the windows was therefore very great.

That of Adrienne's dressing-room was closed on the outside by a sash containing a single large pane of plate glass, and within, by another large plate of ground glass. In the interval of space, about three feet, left between these two transparent inclosures, there was a case or box filled with furze mold, whence sprung forth climbing plants, which, directed round the ground glass, formed a rich garland of leaves and flowers. A garnet damask tapestry, rich with harmoniously blended arabesques, in the purest style, covered the walls; and a thick carpet of similar color was extended over the floor; and this somber ground, presented by the floor and walls, marvelously enhanced the effects of all the harmonious ornaments and decorations of the chamber.

Under the window, opposite to the south, was placed Adrienne's dressing-case, a real masterpiece of the skill of the goldsmith. Upon a large tablet of lapis-lazuli there were scattered boxes of jewels, their lids preciously enameled; several scent boxes of rock crystal, and other implements and utensils of the toilet, some formed of shells, some of mother-of-pearl, and others of ivory, covered with ornaments of gold in extraordinary taste.

Two large figures, modeled in silver with antipue purity, supported an oval swing mirror, which had for its rim, in place of a frame curiously carved, a fresh garland of natural flowers, renewed every day like a nosegay for a ball.

Two enormous Japanese vases, of purple and gold, three feet each in diameter, were placed upon the carpet on each side of the toilet, and, filled with camellias, ibiscures, and Cape jasmine, in full flower, formed a sort of grove, diversified with the most brilliant colors. At the further end of the apartment, opposite the casement, was to be seen, surrounded by another mass of flowers, a reduction in white marble of the enchanting group of Daphnis and Chloe, the most chaste ideal of graceful modesty and youthful beauty.

Two golden lamps burned perfumes upon the same pedestal which supported those two charming figures. A coffer of frosted silver, set off with small figures in jewelry and precious stones, and supported on four feet of gilt bronze, contained various necessaries for the toilet; two frosted Psyches, decorated with diamond earrings; some excellent drawings from Raphael and Titian, painted by Adrienne herself, consisting of portraits of both men

and women of exquisite beauty; several consoles of oriental jasper, supporting ewers and basins of silver and of silver gilt, richly chased and filled with scented waters; a voluptuously rich divan, some seats, and an illuminated gilt table, completed the furniture of this chamber, the atmosphere of which was impregnated with the sweetest perfumes.

Adrienne, whom her attendants had just helped from the bath, was seated before her toilet, her three women surrounding her. By a caprice, or rather by a necessary and logical impulse of her soul, filled as it was with the love of beauty and of harmony in all things, Adrienne had wished the young women who served her to be very pretty, and to be dressed with attention and with a charming originality. We have already seen Georgette, a piquant blonde, attired in her attractive costume of an intriguing lady's-maid of Marivaux; and her two companions were quite equal to her both in gracefulness and gentility.

One of them, named Florine, a tall, delicately slender, and elegant girl, with the air and form of Diana Huntress, was of a pale brown complexion. Her thick black hair was turned up behind, where it was

fastened with a long golden pin. Like the two other girls, her arms were uncovered to facilitate the performance of her duties about and upon the person of her charming mistress. She wore a dress of that gay green so familiar to the Venetian painters. Her petticoat was very ample. Her slender waist curved in from under the plaits of a tucker of white cambric, plaited in five minute folds, and fastened by five gold buttons. The third of Adrienne's women had a face so fresh and ingenuous, a waist so delicate, so pleasing, and so finished, that her mistress had given her the name of Hebe. Her dress of a delicate rose color, and Grecian cut, displayed her charming neck, and her beautiful arms up to the very shoulders. The physiognomy of these three young women was laughter-loving and happy. On their features there was no expression of that bitter sullenness, unwilling and hated obedience, or offensive familiarity, or base and degraded deference, which are the ordinary results of a state of servitude. In the zealous eagerness of the cares and attentions which they lavished upon Adrienne, there seemed to be at least as much of affection as of deference and respect. They appeared to derive an ardent

pleasure from the services which they rendered to their lovely mistress. One would have thought that they attached to the dressing and embellishment of her person all the merits and the enjoyment arising from the execution of a work of art, in the accomplishing of which, fruitful of delights, they were stimulated by the passions of love, of pride, and of joy.

The sun beamed brightly upon the toilet-case, placed in front of the window. Adrienne was seated on a chair, its back elevated a little more than usual. She was enveloped in a long morning-gown of blue silk, embroidered with a leaf of the same color, which was fitted close to her waist, as exquisitely slender and delicate as that of a child of twelve years, by a girdle with floating tags. Her neck, delicately slender and flexible as a bird's, was uncovered, as were also her shoulders and arms, and all were of incomparable beauty. Despite the vulgarity of the comparison, the purest ivory alone can give an idea of the dazzling whiteness of her polished satin skin, of a texture so fresh and so firm that some drops of water, collected and still remaining about the roots of her hair from the bath, rolled in serpentine lines over her shoulders, like pearls, or beads of crystal, over white marble.

And what gave enhanced luster to this wondrous carnation, known but to auburn-headed beauties, was the deep purple of her humid lips—the roseate transparency of her small ears, of her dilated nostrils, and her nails, as bright and glossy as if they had been varnished. In every spot, indeed, where her pure arterial blood, full of animation and heat, could make its way to the skin and shine thrugh the surface, it proclaimed her high health and the vivid life and joyous buoyancy of her glorious youth. Her eyes were very large, and of a velvet softness. Now they glanced, sparkling and shining with comic humor, or intelligence and wit; and now they widened and extended themselves, languishing and swimming between their double fringes of long crisp eyelashes, of as deep a black as her finely drawn and exquisitely arched eyebrows; for, by a delightful freak of Nature, she had black eyebrows and eyelashes to contrast with the golden red of her hair. Her forehead, small like those of ancient Grecian statues, formed with the rest of her face a perfect oval. Her nose, delicately curved, was slightly aquiline; the enamel of her teeth glistened when the light fell upon them; and her vermeil mouth, voluptuously sensual,

seemed to call for sweet kisses, and the gay smiles and delectations of dainty and delicious pleasure. It is impossible to behold or to conceive a carriage of the head freer, more noble, or more elegant than hers; thanks to the great distance which separated the neck and the ear from their attachment to her outspread and dimpled shoulders. We have already said that Adrienne was red-haired; but it was the redness of many of the admirable portraits of women by Titian and Leonardi da Vinci—that is to say, molten gold presents not reflections more delightfully agreeable or more glittering than the naturally undulating mass of her very long hair, as soft and fine as silk, so long that, when let loose, it reached the floor; in it, she could wholly envelop herself, like another Venus arising from the sea. At the present moment, Adrienne's tresses were ravishing to behold. Georgette, her arms bare, stood behind her mistress, and had carefully collected into one of her small white hands those splendid threads whose naturally ardent brightness was doubled in the sunshine. When the pretty lady's-maid plunged a comb of ivory into the midst of the undulating and golden waves of that enormously magnificent skein of

silk, one might have said that a thousand sparks of fire darted forth and coruscated away from it in all directions. The sunshine, too, reflected not less golden and fiery rays from numerous clusters of spiral ringlets, which, divided upon Adrienne's forehead, fell over her cheeks, and in their elastic flexibility caressed the risings of her snowy bosom, to whose charming undulations they adapted and applied themselves. While Georgette, standing, combed the beautiful locks of her mistress, Hebe, with one knee upon the floor, and having upon the other the sweet little foot of Mademoiselle Cardoville, busied herself in fitting it with a remarkably small shoe of black satin, and crossed its slender ties over a silk stocking of a pale yet rosy flesh color, which imprisoned the smallest and finest ankle in the world. Florine, a little further back, presented to her mistress, in a jeweled box, a perfumed paste, with which Adrienne slightly rubbed her dazzling hands and outspread fingers, which seemed tinted with carmine to their extremities. Let us not forget Frisky, who, couched in the lap of her mistress, opened her great eyes with all her might, and seemed to observe the different operations of Adrienne's toilet

Trees intertwined with snakes he walks beneath,
Safe thro' dark valleys ripe with hideous death.
—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 2.

with grave and reflective attention. A silver bell being sounded from without, Florine, at a sign from her mistress, went out and presently returned, bearing a letter upon a small silver-gilt salver. Adrienne, while her women continued fitting on her shoes, dressing her hair, and arranging her in her habiliments, took the letter, which was written by the steward of the estate of Cardoville, and read aloud as follows:

"HONORED MADAME — Knowing your goodness of heart and generosity, I venture to address you with respectful confidence. During twenty years I served the late Count and Duke of Cardoville, your noble father, I believe I may truly say, with probity and zeal. The castle is now sold; so that I and my wife, in our old age, behold ourselves about to be dismissed, and left destitute of all resources; which, alas! is very hard at our time of life."

"Poor creatures!" said Adrienne, interrupting herself in reading: "my father, certainly, always prided himself upon their devotion to him, and their probity."

She continued:

"There does, indeed, remain to us a means of retaining our place here: but it would constrain us to be guilty of baseness; and be the consequences to us what they may, neither I nor my wife wish to purchase our bread at such a price."

"Good, very good," said Adrienne, "always the same—dignity even in poverty—it is the sweet perfume of a flower, not the less sweet because it has bloomed in a meadow."

"In order to explain to you, honored madame, the unworthy task exacted from us, it is necessary to inform you, in the first place, that M. Rodin came here from Paris two days ago."

"Ah! M. Rodin!" said Mademoiselle de Cardoville, interrupting herself anew; "the secretary of Abbe d'Aigrigny! I am not at all surprised at him being engaged in a perfidious or black intrigue. But let us see."

"M. Rodin came from Paris to announce to us that the estate was sold, and that he was sure of being able to obtain our continuance in our place if we would assist him in imposing a priest not of good character upon the new proprietor as her future confessor; and if, the better to attain this

end, we would consent to calumniate another priest, a deserving and excellent man, much loved and much respected in the country. Even that is not all. I was required to write twice or thrice a week to M. Rodin, and to relate to him everything that should occur in the house. I ought to acknowledge, honored madame, that these infamous proposals were as much as possible disguised and dissimulated under sufficiently specious pretexts; but, notwithstanding the aspect which with more or less skill it was attempted to give to the affair, it was precisely and substantially what I have now had the honor of stating to you."

"Corruption, calumny, and false and treacherous impeachment!" said Adrienne, with disgust: "I cannot think of such wretches without involuntarily feeling my mind shocked by dismal ideas of black, venomous, and vile reptiles, of aspects most hideous indeed. How much more do I love to dwell upon the consoling thought of honest Dupont and his wife!"

Adrienne proceeded:

"Believe me, we hesitated not an instant. We quit Cardoville, which has been our home for the last twenty years;

but we shall quit it like honest people, and with the consciousness of our integrity. And now, honored madame, if, in the brilliant circle in which you move—you, who are so benevolent and amiable—could find a place for us by your recommendation, then, with endless gratitude to you, we shall escape from a position of most cruel embarrassment."

"Surely, surely," said Adrienne, "they shall not in vain appeal to me. To wrest excellent persons from the grip of M. Rodin is not only a duty but a pleasure; for it is at once a righteous and a dangerous enterprise; and dearly do I love to brave powerful oppressors!" Adrienne again went on reading:

"After having thus spoken to you of ourselves, honored madame, permit us to implore your protection for other unfortunates; for it would be wicked to think only of one's self. Three days ago, two shipwrecks took place upon our iron bound coast. A few passengers only were saved, and were conducted hither, where I and my wife gave them all necessary attentions. All these passengers have departed for Paris, except one, who still remains, his wounds having hitherto prevented him from leaving the house, and, indeed, they

will constrain him to remain for some days to come. He is a young East Indian prince, of about twenty years of age, and he appears to be as amiable and good as he is handsome, which is not a little to say, though he has a tawny skin, like the rest of his countrymen, as I understand."

"An Indian prince! twenty years of age! young, amiable, and handsome!" exclaimed Adrienne, gayly; "this is quite delightful, and not at all of an ordinary or vulgar nature! Oh! this Indian prince has already awakened my sympathies! But what can I do with this Adonis from the banks of the Ganges, who has come to wreck himself upon the Picardy coast?"

Adrienne's three women looked at her with much astonishment, though they were accustomed to the singular eccentricities of her character.

Georgette and Hebe even indulged in discreet and restrained smiles. Florine, the tall and beautiful pale brown girl, also smiled like her pretty companions; but it was after a short pause of seeming reflection, as if she had previously been engrossed in listening to and recollecting the minutest words of her mistress, who, though powerfully interested by the situation of the "Adonis from Ganges'

banks," as she had called him, continued to read Dupont's letter:

"One of the countrymen of the Indian prince, who has also remained to attend upon him, has given me to understand that the youthful prince has lost in the shipwreck all he possessed, and knows not how to get to Paris, where his speedy presence is required by some affairs of the very greatest importance. It is not from the prince himself that I have obtained this information: no; he appears to be too dignified and proud to complain of his fate; but his countryman, more communicative, has confidentially told me what I have stated, adding, that his young compatriot has already been subjected to great calamities, and that his father, who was the sovereign of an Indian kingdom, has been killed by the English, who have also dispossessed his son of his crown."

"That is very singular," said Adrienne, thoughtfully. "These circumstances recall to my mind that my father often mentioned that one of our relations was espoused in India by a native monarch; and that General Simon (whom they have created a marshal) had entered into his service." Then interrupting herself to

indulge in a smile, she added, "Gracious! this affair will be quite odd and fantastical! Such things happen to nobody but me; and then people say that I am the uncommon creature! But it seems to me that it is not I, but Providence, which, in truth, sometimes shows itself very eccentric! But let us see if worthy Dupont gives the name of this handsome prince."

"We trust, honored madame, that you will pardon our boldness; but we should have thought ourselves very selfish, if, while stating to you our own griefs, we had not also informed you that there is with us a brave and estimable prince involved in so much distress. In fine, lady, trust to me; I am old, and I have had much experience of men; and it was only necessary to see the nobleness of expression and the sweetness of countenance of this young Indian to enable me to judge that he is worthy of the interest which I have taken the liberty to request in his behalf. It would be sufficient to transmit to him a small sum of money for the purchase of some European clothing; for he has lost all his Indian vestments in the shipwreck."

"Good heavens! European clothing!" exclaimed Adrienne, gayly. "Poor young

prince. Heaven preserve him from that; and me also! Chance has sent hither, from the heart of India, a mortal so far favored as never to have worn the abominable European costume—those hideous habits, and frightful hats, which render the men so ridiculous, so ugly, that in truth there is not a single good quality to be discovered in them, nor one spark of what can either captivate or attract! There comes to me at last a handsome young prince from the East, where the men are clothed in silk and cashmere. Most assuredly I'll not miss this rare and unique opportunity of exposing myself to a very serious and formidable temptation! No, no! not a European dress from me, though poor Dupont requests it! But the name—the name of this dear prince! Once more, what a singular event is this? If it should turn out to be that cousin from beyond the Ganges! During my childhood, I have heard so much in praise of his royal father! Oh! I shall be quite ravished to give his son the kind reception which he merits!" And then she read on:

"If, besides this small sum, honored madame, you are so kind as to give him, and also his companion, the means of

reaching Paris, you will confer a very great service upon this poor young prince, who is at present so unfortunate.

"To conclude, I know enough of your delicacy to be aware that it would perhaps be agreeable to you to afford this succor to the prince without being known as his benefactress; in which case, I beg that you will be pleased to command me; and you may rely upon my discretion. If, on the contrary, you wish to address it directly to himself, his name is, as it has been written for me by his countryman, Prince Djalma, son of Kadja-sing, King of Mundi."

"Djalma!" said Adrienne, quickly, and appearing to call up her recollections, "Kadja-sing! Yes—that is it! These are the very names that my father so often repeated while telling me that there was nothing more chivalric or heroic in the world than the old king, our relation by marriage; and the son has not derogated, it would seem, from that character. Yes, Djalma, Kadja-sing—once more, that is it—such names are not so common," she added, smiling, "that one should either forget or confound them with others. This Djalma is my cousin! Brave and good—young and charming! above all, he has

never worn the horrid European dress! And destitute of every resource! This is quite ravishing! It is too much happiness at once! Quick, quick! let us improvise a pretty fairy tale, of which the handsome and beloved prince shall be the hero! The poor bird of the golden and azure plumage has wandered into our dismal climate; but he will find here, at least, something to remind him of his native region of sunshine and perfumes!" Then, addressing one of her women, she said: "Georgette, take paper and write, my child." The young girl went to the gilt illuminated table, which contained materials for writing; and, having seated herself, she said to her mistress: "I await orders."

Adrienne de Cardoville, whose charming countenance was radiant with the gayety of happiness and joy, proceeded to dictate the following letter to a meritorious old painter, who had long since taught her the arts of drawing and designing; in which arts she excelled, as indeed she did in all others:

"MY DEAR TITIAN, MY GOOD VERONESE, MY WORTHY RAPHAEL—You can render me a great service; and you will do it, I am sure, with that perfect and obliging

complaisance by which you are ever distinguished.

"It is to go immediately and apply yourself to the skillful hand who designed my last costumes of the fifteenth century. But the present affair is to procure modern East Indian dresses for a young man —yes, sir—for a young man—and according to what I imagine of him, I fancy that you can cause his measure to be taken from the Antinous, or, rather, from the Indian Bacchus; yes—that will be more likely.

"It is necessary that these vestments be at once of perfect propriety and correctness, magnificently rich, and of the greatest elegance. You will choose the most beautiful stuffs possible; and endeavor, above all things, that they be, or resemble, tissues of Indian manufacture; and you will add to them, for turbans and sashes, six splendid long cashmere shawls, two of them white, two red, and two orange; as nothing suits brown complexions better than those colors.

"This done (and I allow you at the utmost only two or three days), you will depart post in my carriage for Cardoville Manor House, which you know so well. The steward, the excellent Dupont, one of

your old friends, will there introduce you to an Indian Prince, named Djalma; and you will tell that most potent, grave, and reverend seignior, of another quarter of the globe, that you have come on the part of an unknown friend, who, taking upon himself the duty of a brother, sends him what is necessary to preserve him from the odious fashions of Europe. You will add, that his friend expects him with so much impatience that he conjures him to come to Paris immediately. If he objects that he is suffering, you will tell him that my carriage is an excellent bed-closet; and you will cause the bedding, etc., which it contains, to be fitted up, till he finds it quite commodious. Remember to make very humble excuses for the unknown friend not sending to the prince either rich palanquins, or even, modestly, a single elephant; for alas! palanquins are only to be seen at the opera; and there are no elephants but those in the menagerie—though this must make us seem strangely barbarous in his eyes.

"As soon as you shall have decided on your departure, perform the journey as rapidly as possible, and bring here, into my house, in the Rue de Babylone (what predestination! that I should dwell in the

street of BABYLON—a name which must at least accord with the ear of an Oriental)—you will bring hither, I say, this dear prince, who is so happy as to have been born in a country of flowers, diamonds, and sun!

"Above all you will have the kindness, my old and worthy friend, not to be at all astonished at this new freak, and refrain from indulging in extravagant conjectures. Seriously, the choice which I have made of you in this affair—of you, whom I esteem and most sincerely honor—is because it is sufficient to say to you that, at the bottom of all this, there is something more than a seeming act of folly."

In uttering these last words, the tone of Adrienne was as serious and dignified as it had been previously comic and jocose. But she quickly resumed, more gayly, dictating to Georgette.

"Adieu, my old friend. I am something like that commander of ancient days, whose heroic nose and conquering chin you have so often made me draw: I jest with the utmost freedom of spirit even in the moment of battle: yes, for within an hour I shall give battle, a pitched battle—to my dear pew-dwelling aunt. Fortunately, audacity and courage never failed me;

and I burn with impatience for the engagement with my austere princess.

"A kiss and a thousand heartfelt recollections to your excellent wife. If I speak of her here, who is so justly respected, you will please to understand it is to make you quite at ease as to the consequences of this running away with, for my sake, a charming young prince—for it is proper to finish well, where I should have begun, by avowing to you that he is charming indeed!

"Once more, adieu!"

Then, addressing Georgette, she said, "Have you done writing, chit?"

"Yes, madame."

"Oh! add this postscript:

"P.S.—I send you draft on sight on my banker for all expenses. Spare nothing. You know I am quite a grand seigneur! I must use this masculine expression, since your sex have exclusively appropriated to yourselves (tyrants as you are) a term, so significant as it is of noble generosity."

"Now, Georgette," said Adrienne, "bring me an envelope, and the letter, that I may sign it." Mademoiselle de Cardoville took the pen that Georgette

presented to her, signed the letter, and inclosed in it an order upon her banker, which was expressed thus:

"Please pay M. Norval, on demand without grace, the sum he may require for expenses incurred on my account.

"ADRIENNE DE CARDOVILLE."

During all this scene, while Georgette wrote, Florine and Hebe had continued to busy themselves with the duties of their mistress's toilet, who had put off her morning gown, and was now in full dress, in order to wait upon the princess, her aunt. From the sustained and immovably fixed attention with which Florine had listened to Adrienne's dictating to Georgette her letter to M. Norval, it might easily have been seen that, as was her habit indeed, she endeavored to retain in her memory even the slightest words of her mistress.

"Now, chit," said Adrienne to Hebe, "send this letter immediately to M. Norval."

The same silver bell was again rung from without. Hebe moved toward the door of the dressing-room, to go and inquire what it was, and also to execute the order of her mistress as to the letter. But Florine precipitated herself, so to speak,

before her, and so as to prevent her leaving the apartment; and said to Adrienne:

"Will it please my lady for me to send this letter? I have occasion to go to the mansion."

"Go, Florine, then," said Adrienne, "seeing that you wish it. Georgette, seal the letter."

At the end of a second or two, during which Georgette had sealed the letter, Hebe returned.

"Madame," said she, re-entering, "the workingman who brought back Frisky yesterday entreats you to admit him for an instant. He is very pale, and he appears quite sad."

"Would that he may already have need of me! I should be too happy!" said Adrienne, gayly. "Show the excellent young man into the little saloon. And, Florine, dispatch this letter immediately."

Florine went out. Mademoiselle de Cardoville, followed by Frisky, entered the little reception-room, where Agricola awaited her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INTERVIEW.

When Adrienne de Cardoville entered the saloon where Agricola expected her, she was dressed with extremely elegant simplicity. A robe of deep blue, perfectly fitted to her shape, embroidered in front with interlacings of black silk, according to the then fashion, outlined her nymph-like figure and her rounded bosom. A French cambric collar, fastened by a large Scotch pebble, set as a brooch, served her for a necklace. Her magnificent golden hair formed a framework for her fair countenance, with an incredible profusion of long and light spiral tresses, which reached nearly to her waist.

Agricola, in order to save explanations with his father, and to make him believe that he had indeed gone to the workshop of M. Hardy, had been obliged to array himself in his working dress; he had put on a new blouse though, and the collar of his shirt, of stout linen, very white, fell over upon a black cravat, negligently tied; his gray trousers allowed his well polished boots to be seen; and he held between his

muscular hands a cap of fine woolen cloth, quite new. To sum up, his blue blouse, embroidered with red, showing off the nervous chest of the young blacksmith, and indicating his robust shoulders, falling down in graceful folds, put not the least constraint upon his free and easy gait, and became him much better than either frock-coat or dress-coat would have done. While awaiting Mademoiselle de Cardoville, Agricola mechanically examined a magnificent silver vase, admirably graven. A small tablet, of the same metal, fitted into a cavity of its antique stand, bore the words—"Chased by JEAN MARIE, working chaser, 1831."

Adrienne had stepped so lightly upon the carpet of her saloon, only separated from another apartment by the doors, that Agricola had not perceived the young lady's entrance. He started, and turned quickly round, upon hearing a silvery and brilliant voice say to him—

"That is a beautiful vase, is it not, sir?"

"Very beautiful, madame," answered Agricola, greatly embarrassed.

"You may see from it that I like what is equitable," added Mademoiselle de Cardoville, pointing with her finger to the little silver tablet—"an artist puts his name

upon his painting; an author publishes his on the title-page of his book; and I contend that an artisan ought also to have his name connected with his workmanship."

"Oh, madame, so this name?"

"Is that of the poor chaser who executed this masterpiece, at the order of a rich goldsmith. When the latter sold me the vase, he was amazed at my eccentricity, he would have almost said at my injustice, when, after having made him tell me the name of the author of this production, I ordered his name to be inscribed upon it, instead of that of the goldsmith, which had already been affixed to the stand. In the absence of the rich profits, let the artisan enjoy the fame of his skill. Is it not just, sir?"

It would have been impossible for Adrienne to commence the conversation more graciously: so that the blacksmith, already beginning to feel a little more at ease, answered:

"Being a mechanic myself, madame, I cannot but be doubly affected by such a proof of your sense of equity and justice."

"Since you are a mechanic, sir," resumed Adrienne, "I cannot but felicitate myself on having so suitable a hearer. But please to be seated."

With a gesture full of affability, she pointed to an arm-chair of purple silk embroidered with gold, sitting down herself upon a *tête-a-tête* of the same materials.

Seeing Agricola's hesitation, who again cast down his eyes with embarrassment, Adrienne, to encourage him, showed him Frisky, and said to him gayly: "This poor little animal, to which I am very much attached, will always afford me a lively remembrance of your obliging complaisance, sir. And this visit seems to me to be of happy augury; I know not what good presentiment whispers to me, that perhaps I shall have the pleasure of being useful to you in some affair."

"Madame," said Agricola, resolutely, "my name is Baudoin: a blacksmith in the employment of M. Hardy, at Plessy, near the city. Yesterday you offered me your purse, and I refused it: to-day, I have come to request of you perhaps ten or twenty times the sum that you had generously proposed. I have said thus much all at once, madame, because it costs me the greatest effort. The words blistered my lips, but now I shall be more at ease."

"I appreciate the delicacy of your scruples, sir," said Adrienne; "but if

you knew me, you would address me without fear. How much do you require?"

"I do not know, madame," answered Agricola.

"I beg your pardon. You don't know what sum?"

"No, madame; and I come to request, not only the sum necessary to me, but also information as to what that sum is."

"Let us see, sir," said Adrienne, smiling, "explain this to me. In spite of my good will, you feel that I cannot divine, all at once, what it is that is required."

"Madame, in two words, I can state the truth. I have a good old mother, who, in her youth, broke her health by excessive labor, to enable her to bring me up; and not only me, but a poor abandoned child whom she had picked up. It is my turn now to maintain her; and that I have the happiness of doing. But in order to do so, I have only my labor. If I am dragged from my employment, my mother will be without support."

"Your mother cannot want for anything now, sir, since I interest myself for her."

"You will interest yourself for her, madame?" said Agricola.

"Certainly," replied Adrienne.

"But you don't know her," exclaimed the blacksmith.

"Now I do; yes."

"Oh, madame!" said Agricola, with emotion, after a moment's silence. "I understand you. But indeed you have a noble heart. Mother Bunch was right."

"Mother Bunch?" said Adrienne, looking at Agricola with a very surprised air; for what he said to her was an enigma.

The blacksmith, who blushed not for his friends, replied frankly:

"Madame, permit me to explain to you. Mother Bunch is a poor and very industrious young workwoman, with whom I have been brought up. She is deformed, which is the reason why she is called Mother Bunch. But though, on the one hand, she is sunk as low as you are highly elevated on the other, yet, as regards the heart—as to delicacy—oh, lady, I am certain that your heart is of equal worth with hers! That was at once her own thought, after I had related to her in what manner, yesterday, you had presented me with that beautiful flower."

"I can assure you, sir," said Adrienne, sincerely touched, "that this comparison flatters and honors me more than anything else that you could say to me—a heart that

remains good and delicate, in spite of cruel misfortunes, is so rare a treasure; while it is very easy to be good, when we have youth and beauty, and to be delicate and generous, when we are rich. I accept, then, your comparison; but on condition that you will quickly put me in a situation to deserve it. Pray go on, therefore."

In spite of the gracious cordiality of Mdlle. de Cardoville, there was always observable in her so much of that natural dignity which arises from independence of character, so much elevation of soul and nobleness of sentiment, that Agricola, forgetting the ideal physical beauty of his protectress, rather experienced for her the emotions of an affectionate and kindly, though profound respect, which offered a singular and striking contrast with the youth and gayety of the lovely being who inspired him with this sentiment.

"If my mother, alone, madame, were exposed to the rigor which I dread, I should not be so greatly disquieted with the fear of a compulsory suspension of my employment. Among poor people, the poor help one another; and my mother is worshiped by all the inmates of our house, our excellent neighbors, who would willingly succor her. But they themselves

are far from being well off; and as they would incur privations by assisting her, their little benefits would be still more painful to my mother than the endurance even of misery by herself. And besides, it is not only for my mother that my exertions are required, but for my father, whom we have not seen for eighteen years, and who has just arrived from Siberia, where he remained during all that time, from zealous devotion of his former general, now Marshal Simon."

"Marshal Simon!" said Adrienne, quickly, with an expression of much surprise.

"Do you know the marshal, madame?"

"I do not personally know him; but he married a lady of our family."

"What joy!" exclaimed the blacksmith; "then the two young ladies, his daughters, whom my father has brought from Russia, are your relations!"

"Has Marshal Simon two daughters?" asked Adrienne, more and more astonished and interested.

"Yes, madame, two little angels of fifteen or sixteen; and so pretty, so sweet; they are twins so very much alike as to be mistaken for one another. Their mother died in exile; and the little she possessed

On thro' the storm he speeds, 'midst drowning cries,
Whilst helpless vessels sink before his eyes.
—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 2.

having been confiscated, they have come hither with my father, from the depths of Siberia, traveling very wretchedly; but he tried to make them forget so many privations by the fervency of his devotion and his tenderness. My excellent father! you will not believe, madame, that, with the courage of a lion, he has all the love and tenderness of a mother."

"And where are the dear children, sir?" asked Adrienne.

"At our home, madame. It is that which renders my position so very hard; that which has given me courage to come to you; it is not but that my labor would be sufficient for our little household, even thus agumented; but that I am about to be arrested."

"About to be arrested. For what?"

"Pray, madame, have the goodness to read this letter, which has been sent by some one to Mother Bunch."

Agricola gave to Mademoiselle de Cardoville the anonymous letter which had been received by the workwoman.

After having read the letter, Adrienne said to the blacksmith, with surprise, "It appears, sir, you are a poet!"

"I have neither the ambition nor the pretensions to be one, madame. Only,

when I return to my mother after a day's toil, and often, even while forging my iron, in order to divert and relax my attention, I amuse myself with rhymes, sometimes composing an ode, sometimes a song."

"And your song of the Freed Workingman, which is mentioned in this letter, is, therefore, very disaffected—very dangerous?"

"Oh, no, madame; quite the contrary. For myself, I have the good fortune to be employed in the factory of M. Hardy, who renders the condition of his workpeople as happy as that of their less fortunate comrades is the reverse; and I had limited myself to attempt in favor of the great mass of the working classes an equitable, sincere, warm, and earnest claim—nothing more. But you are aware, perhaps, madame, that in times of conspiracy and commotion, people are often recriminated and imprisoned on very slight grounds. Should such a misfortune befall me, what will become of my mother, my father, and the two orphans whom we are bound to regard as part of our family until the return of their father, Marshal Simon? It is on this account, madame, that, if I remain, I run the risk of being arrested. I have come to

you to request you to provide surety for me; so that I should not be compelled to exchange the workshops for the prison, in which case I can answer for it that the fruits of my labor will suffice for all."

"Thank the stars!" said Adrienne, gayly, "this affair will arrange itself quite easily. Henceforth, Mr. Poet, you shall draw your inspirations in the midst of good fortune instead of adversity. Sad muse! But first of all, bonds shall be given for you."

"Oh, madame, you have saved us!"

"To continue," said Adrienne, "the physician of our family is intimately connected with a very important minister (understand that as you like," said she, smiling, "you will not deceive yourself much). The doctor exercises very great influence over this great statesman; for he has always had the happiness of recommending to him, on account of his health, the sweets and repose of private life, to the very eve of the day on which his portfolio was taken from him. Keep yourself, then, perfectly at ease. If the surety be insufficient, we shall be able to devise some other means."

"Madame," said Agricola, with great emotion, "I am indebted to you for the repose, perhaps for the life of my mother. Believe that I shall ever be grateful."

"That is all quite simple. Now for another thing. It is proper that those who have too much should have the right of coming to the aid of those who have too little. Marshal Simon's daughters are members of my family, and they will reside here with me, which will be more suitable. You will apprise your worthy mother of this; and in the evening, besides going to thank her for the hospitality which she has shown to my young relations, I shall fetch them home."

. . . . . .

At this moment Georgette, throwing open the door which separated the room from an adjacent apartment, hurriedly entered, with an affrighted look, exclaiming:

"Oh, madame, something extraordinary is going on in the street."

"How so? Explain yourself," said Adrienne

"I went to conduct my dressmaker to the little garden-gate," said Georgette, "where I saw some ill-looking men, attentively examining the walls and windows of the little outbuilding belonging to the pavilion, as if they wished to spy out some one."

"Madame," said Agricola, with chagrin, "I have not been deceived. They are after me."

"What say you?"

"I thought I was followed, from the moment when I left the Rue St. Mery; and now it is beyond doubt. They must have seen me enter your house; and are on the watch to arrest me. Well, now that your interest has been acquired for my mother—now that I have no further uneasiness for Marshal Simon's daughters—rather than hazard your exposure to anything the least unpleasant, I run to deliver myself up."

"Beware of that, sir," said Adrienne, quickly. "Liberty is too precious to be voluntarily sacrificed. Besides, Georgette may have been mistaken. But in any case, I entreat you not to surrender yourself. Take my advice, and escape being arrested. That, I think, will greatly facilitate my measures; for I am of opinion that justice evinces a great desire to keep possession of those upon whom she has once pounced."

"Madame," said Hebe, now also entering with a terrified look, "a man knocked at the little door, and inquired if a young man in a blue blouse has not entered here. He added, that the person whom he seeks is named Agricola Baudoin, and that he has something to tell him of great importance."

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"That's my name," said Agricola, "but the important information is a trick to draw me out."

"Evidently," said Adrienne; "and therefore we must play off trick for trick. What did you answer, child?" added she, addressing herself to Hebe.

"I answered that I didn't know what he was talking about."

"Quite right," said Adrienne; "and the man who put the question?"

"He went away, madame."

"Without doubt to come back again soon," said Agricola.

"That is very probable," said Adrienne, "and therefore, sir, it is necessary for you to remain here some hours with resignation. I am unfortunately obliged to go immediately to the Princess Saint-Dizier, my aunt, for an important interview, which can no longer be delayed, and is rendered more pressing still by what you have told me concerning the daughters of Marshal Simon. Remain here, then, sir; since if you go out you will certainly be arrested."

"Madame, pardon my refusal; but I must say once more that I ought not to accept this generous offer."

"Why?"

"They have tried to draw me out, in order to avoid penetrating with the power of the law into your dwelling; but if I go not out, they will come in; and never will I expose you to anything so disagreeable. Now that I am no longer uneasy about my mother, what signifies prison?"

"And the grief that your mother will feel, her uneasiness, and her fears—nothing? Think of your father; and that poor workwoman who loves you as a brother, and whom I value as a sister;—say, sir, do you forget them also? Believe me, it is better to spare those torments to your family. Remain here; and before the evening, I am certain, either by giving surety or some other means, of delivering you from these annoyances."

"But, madame, supposing that I do accept your generous offer, they will come and find me here."

"Not at all. There is in this pavilion, which was formerly the abode of a nobleman's left-handed wife—you see, sir," said Adrienne, smiling, "that I live in a very profane place—there is here a secret place of concealment, so wonderfully well-contrived that it can defy all searches. Georgette will conduct you to it. You

will be very well accommodated. You will even be able to write some verses for me, if the place inspire you."

"Oh, madame! how great is your goodness! how have I merited it?"

"Oh, sir, I will tell you. Admitting that your character and your position do not entitle you to any interest; admitting that I may not owe a sacred debt to your father for the touching regards and cares he has bestowed upon the daughters of Marshal Simon, my relations—do you forget Frisky, sir?" asked Adrienne, laughing—"Frisky, there, whom you have restored to my fondlings? Seriously, if I laugh," continued this singular and extravagant creature, "it is because I know that you are entirely out of danger, and that I feel an increase of happiness. Therefore, sir, write for me quickly your address, and your mother's, in this pocket-book; follow Georgette; and spin me some pretty verses, if you do not bore yourself too much in that prison to which you fly."

While Georgette conducted the blacksmith to the hiding-place, Hebe brought her mistress a small gray beaver hat with a gray feather; for Adrienne had to cross

the park to reach the house occupied by the Princess Saint-Dizier.

. . . . . .

A quarter of an hour after this scene, Florine entered mysteriously the apartment of Mrs. Grivois, the first woman of the princess.

"Well?" demanded Mrs. Grivois of the young woman.

"Here are the notes which I have taken this morning," said Florine, putting a paper into the duenna's hand. "Happily, I have a good memory."

"At what time exactly did she return home this morning?" asked the duenna, quickly.

"Who, madame?"

"Miss Adrienne."

"She did not go out, madame. We put her in the bath at nine o'clock."

"But before nine o'clock she came home, after having passed the night out of her house. Eight o'clock was the time at which she returned, however."

Florine looked at Mrs. Grivois with profound astonishment, and said:

"I do not understand you, madame."

"What's that? Madame did not come home this morning at eight o'clock? Dare you lie?"

"I was ill yesterday, and did not come down till nine this morning, in order to assist Georgette and Hebe help our young lady from the bath. I know nothing of what passed previously, I swear to you, madame."

"That alters the case. You must ferret out what I allude to from your companions. They don't disturst you, and will tell you all."

"Yes, madame."

"What has your mistress done this morning since you saw her?"

"Madame dictated a letter to Georgette for M. Norval. I requested permission to send it off, as a pretext for going out, and for writing down all I recollected."

"Very well. And this letter?"

"Jerome had to go out, and I gave it him to put in the post-office."

"Idiot!" exclaimed Mrs. Grivios, "couldn't you bring it to me?"

"But, as madame dictated it aloud to Georgette, as is her custom, I knew the contents of the letter; and I have written it in my notes."

"That's not the same thing. It is likely there was need to delay sending off this letter. The princess will be very much displeased."

"I thought I did right, madame."

"I know that it is not good will that fails you. For these six months I have been satisfied with you. But this time you have committed a very great mistake."

"Be indulgent, madame! what I do is sufficiently painful!" The girl stifled a sigh.

Mrs. Grivois looked fixedly at her, and said in a sardonic tone:

"Very well, my dear, do not continue it. If you have scruples, you are free. Go your way."

"You well know that I am not free, madame," said Florine, reddening; and with tears in her eyes she added: "I am dependent upon M. Rodin, who placed me here."

"Wherefore these regrets, then?"

"In spite of one's self, one feels remorse. Madame is so good and so confiding."

"She is all perfection, certainly! But you are not here to sing her praises. What occurred afterward?"

"The workingman who yesterday found and brought back Frisky, came early this morning and requested permission to speak with my young lady."

"And is this workingman still in her house?"

"I don't know. He came in when I was going out with the letter."

"You must contrive to learn what it was this workingman came about."

"Yes, madame."

"Has your mistress seemed preoccupied, uneasy, or afraid of the interview which she is to have to-day with the princess? She conceals so little of what she thinks that you ought to know."

"She has been as gay as usual. She has even jested about the interview."

"Oh! jested, has she?" said the tire-woman, muttering between her teeth, without Florine being able to hear her; "'They laugh most who laugh last.' In spite of her audacious and diabolical character, she would tremble and would pray for mercy if she knew what awaits her this day." Then addressing Florine, she continued:

"Return, and keep yourself, I advise you, from those fine scruples, which will be quite enough to do you a bad turn. Do not forget!"

"I cannot forget that I belong not to myself, madame."

"Any way, let it be so. Farewell."

Florine quitted the mansion and crossed the park to regain the summer-house, while

Mrs. Grivois went immediately to the Princess Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FEMALE JESUIT.

DURING the preceding scenes which occurred in the Pompadour rotunda, occupied by Miss de Cardoville, other events took place in the residence of the Princess Saint Dizier. The elegance and sumptuousness of the former dwelling presented a strong contrast to the gloomy interior of the latter, the first floor of which was inhabited by the princess, for the plan of the ground-floor rendered it only fit for giving parties; and, for a long time past, Madame de Saint-Dizier had renounced all worldly splendors. The gravity of her domestics, all aged and dressed in black; the profound silence which reigned in her abode, where everything was spoken, if it could be called speaking, in undertone; and the almost monastic regularity and order of this immense mansion, communicated to everything around the princess a sad and chilling character. A man of the world, who joined great courage to rare independence of spirit, speaking of the princess (to whom Adrienne de Cardoville went, according to her expression, to fight

a pitched battle), said of her as follows: "In order to avoid having Madame de Saint-Dizier for an enemy, I, who am neither bashful nor cowardly, have, for the first time in my life, been both a noodle and a coward." This man spoke sincerely. But Madame de Saint-Dizier had not all at once arrived at this high degree of importance.

Some words are necessary for the purpose of exhibiting distinctly some phases in the life of this dangerous and implacable woman, who, by her affiliation with the Order of Jesuits, had acquired an occult and formidable power. For there is something even more menacing than a Jesuit: it is a Jesuitess: and, when one has seen certain circles, it becomes evident that there exist, unhappily, many of those affiliated, who, more or less, uniformly dress (for the lay members of the Order call themselves "Jesuits of the short robe").

Madame de Saint-Dizier, once very beautiful, had been, during the last years of the Empire, and the early years of the Restoration, one of the most fashionable women of Paris, of a stirring, active, adventurous and commanding spirit, of cold heart, but lively imagination. She was greatly given to amorous adventures, not

from tenderness of heart, but from a passion for intrigue, which she loved as men love play—for the sake of the emotions it excites. Unhappily, such had always been the blindness or the carelessness of her husband, the Prince of Saint-Dizier (eldest brother of the Count of Rennepont and Duke of Cardoville, father of Adrienne), that during his life he had never said one word that could make it be thought that he suspected the actions of his wife. Attaching herself to Napoleon, to dig a mine under the feet of the Colossus, that design at least afforded emotions sufficient to gratify the humor of the most insatiable. During some time all went well. The princess was beautiful and spirited, dexterous and false, perfidious and seductive. She was surrounded by fanatical adorers, upon whom she played off a kind of ferocious coquetry, to induce them to run their heads into grave conspiracies. She hoped to resuscitate the *Frondeur* party, and carried on a very active secret correspondence with some influential personages abroad, well known for their hatred against the Emperor and France. Hence arose her first epistolary relations with the Marquis d'Aigrigny, then colonel in the Russian service and aid-de-camp to Gen-

eral Moreau. But one day all these pretty intrigues were discovered. Many knights of Madame de Saint-Dizier were sent to Vincennes; but the Emperor, who might have punished her terribly, contented himself with exiling the princess to one of her estates near Dunkirk.

Upon the Restoration, the persecutions which Madame de Saint-Dizier had suffered for the Good Cause were entered to her credit, and she acquired even then very considerable influence, in spite of the lightness of her behavior. The Marquis d'Aigrigny, having entered the military service of France, remained there. He was handsome, and of fashionable manners and address. He had corresponded and conspired with the princess, without knowing her; and these circumstances necessarily led to a close connection between them.

Excessive self-love, a taste for exciting pleasures, aspirations of hatred, pride, and lordliness, a species of evil sympathy, the perfidious attraction of which brings together perverse natures without mingling them, had made of the princess and the marquis accomplices rather than lovers. This connection, based upon selfish and bitter feelings, and upon the support which

two characters of this dangerous temper could lend to each other against a world in which their spirit of intrigue, of gallantry, and of contempt had made them many enemies, this connection endured till the moment when, after his duel with General Simon, the marquis entered a religious house, without any one understanding the cause of his unexpected and sudden resolution.

The princess, having not yet heard the hour of her conversion strike, continued to whirl round the vortex of the world with a greedy, jealous, and hateful ardor, for she saw that the last years of her beauty were dying out.

An estimate of the character of this woman may be formed from the following fact:

Still very agreeable, she wished to close her worldly and volatile career with some brilliant and final triumph, as a great actress knows the proper time to withdraw from the stage so as to leave regrets behind. Desirous of offering up this final incense to her own vanity, the princess skillfully selected her victims. She spied out in the world a young couple who idolized each other; and, by dint of cunning and address, she succeeded in taking away

the lover from his mistress, a charming woman of eighteen, by whom he was adored. This triumph being achieved, Madame Saint-Dizier retired from the fashionable world in the full blaze of her exploit. After many long conversations with the Abbe-Marquis d'Aigrigny, who had become a renowned preacher, she departed suddenly from Paris, and spent two years upon her estate near Dunkirk, to which she took only one of her female attendants; viz., Mrs. Grivois.

When the princess afterward returned to Paris, it was impossible to recognize the frivolous, intriguing, and dissipated woman she had formerly been. The metamorphosis was as complete as it was extraordinary and even startling. Saint-Dizier House, heretofore open to the banquets and festivals of every kind of pleasure, became gloomily silent and austere. Instead of the world of elegance and fashion, the princess now received in her mansion only women of ostentatious piety, and men of consequence, who were remarkably exemplary by the extravagant rigor of their religious and monarchial principles. Above all, she drew around her several noted members of the higher orders of the clergy. She was appointed patroness of

a body of religious females. She had her own confessor, chaplain, almoner, and even spiritual director; but this last performed his functions *in partibus.* The Marquis-Abbe d'Aigrigny continued in reality to be her spiritual guide; and it is almost unnecessary to say that for a long time past their mutual relations as to flirting had entirely ceased.

This sudden and complete conversion of a gay and distinguished woman, especially as it was loudly trumpeted forth, struck the greater number of persons with wonder and respect. Others, more discerning, only smiled.

A single anecdote, from among a thousand, will suffice to show the alarming influence and power which the princess had acquired since her affiliation with the Jesuits. This anecdote will also exhibit the deep, vindictive, and pitiless character of this woman, whom Adrienne de Cardoville had so imprudently made herself ready to brave.

Among the persons who smiled more or less at the conversion of Madame de Saint-Dizier were the young and charming couple whom she had so cruelly disunited before she quitted forever the scenes of revelry in which she had lived. The young couple

became more impassioned and devoted to each other than ever; they were reconciled and married, after the passing storm which had hurled them asunder; and they indulged in no other vengeance against the author of their temporary infelicity than that of mildly jesting at the pious conversion of the woman who had done them so much injury.

Some time after, a terrible fatality overtook the loving pair. The husband, until then blindly unsuspicious, was suddenly inflamed by anonymous communications. A dreadful rupture ensued, and the young wife perished.

As for the husband, certain vague rumors, far from distinct, yet pregnant with secret meanings, perfidiously contrived, and a thousand times more detestable than formal accusation, which can at least be met and destroyed, were strewn about him with so much perseverance, with a skill so diabolical, and by means and ways so very various, that his best friends, by little and little, withdrew themselves from him, thus yielding to the slow, irresistible influence of that incessant whispering and buzzing, confused as indistinct, amounting to some such result as this—

"Well! you know!" says one.

"No!" replies another.

"People say very vile things about him."

"Do they? really! What then?"

"I don't know! Bad reports! Rumors grievously affecting his honor!"

"The deuce! That's very serious. It accounts for the coldness with which he is now everywhere received!"

"I shall avoid him in future!"

"So will I," etc.

Such is the world, that very often nothing more than groundless surmises are necessary to brand a man whose very happiness may have incurred envy. So it was with the gentleman of whom we speak. The unfortunate man, seeing the void around him extending itself—feeling (so to speak) the earth crumbling from beneath his feet, knew not where to find or grasp the impalpable enemy whose blows he felt; for not once had the idea occurred to him of suspecting the princess, whom he had not seen since his adventure with her. Anxiously desiring to learn why he was so much shunned and despised, he at length sought an explanation from an old friend; but he received only a disdainfully evasive answer; at which, being exasperated, he demanded satisfaction. His adversary replied—"If you can find two per-

sons of *our* acquaintance, I will fight you!" The unhappy man could not find one!

Finally, forsaken by all, without having ever obtained any explanation of the reason for forsaking him—suffering keenly for the fate of the wife whom he had lost, he became mad with grief, rage and despair, and killed himself.

. . . . . .

On the day of his death, Madame de Saint-Dizier remarked that it was fit and necessary that one who had lived so shamefully should come to an equally shameful end, and that he who had so long jested at all laws, human and divine, could not more seemly terminate his wretched life than by perpetrating a last crime—suicide! And the friends of Madame de Saint-Dizier hawked about and everywhere repeated these terrible words, with a contrite air, as if beatified and convinced! But this was not all. Along with chastisements there were rewards.

Observant people remarked that the favorites of the religious clan of Madame de Saint-Dizier rose to high distinctions with singular rapidity. The virtuous young men, such as were religiously attentive to tiresome sermons, were married

to rich orphans of the Sacred Heart convents, who were held in reserve for the purpose; poor young girls, who, learning too late what it is to have a pious husband selected and imposed upon them by a set of devotees, often expiated by very bitter tears the deceitful favor of being thus admitted into a world of hypocrisy and falsehood, in which they found themselves strangers without support, crushed by it if they dared to complain of the marriages to which they had been condemned.

In the parlor of Madame de Saint-Dizier were appointed prefects, colonels, treasurers, deputies, academicians, bishops and peers of the realm, from whom nothing more was required in return for the all-powerful support bestowed upon them, but to wear a pious gloss, sometimes publicly take the communion, swear furious war against everything impious or revolutionary—and, above all, correspond confidentially upon "different subjects of his choosing" with the Abbe d'Aigrigny — an amusement, moreover, which was very agreeable; for the abbe was the most amiable man in the world, the most witty, and, above all, the most obliging. The following is a historical fact, which requires the bitter and vengeful irony of Moliere or Pascal to do it justice:

During the last year of the Restoration, there was one of the mighty dignitaries of the court, a firm and independent man, who did not make profession (as the holy fathers call it), that is, who did not communicate at the altar. The splendor amid which he moved was calculated to give the weight of a very injurious example to his indifference. The Abbe-Marquis d' Aigrigny was therefore dispatched to him; and he, knowing the honorable and elevated character of the non-communicant, thought that if he could only bring him to profess by any means (whatever the means might be) the effect would be what was desired. Like a man of intellect, the abbe prized the dogma but cheaply himself. He only spoke of the suitableness of the step, and of the highly salutary example which the resolution to adopt it would afford to the public.

"M. Abbe," replied the person sought to be influenced, "I have a greater respect for religion than you have. I should consider it an infamous mockery to go to the communion table without feeling the proper conviction."

"Nonsense! you inflexible man! you frowning Alcestes," said the marquis-abbe, smiling slyly. "Your profit and

Transfix'd with awe, he feels his God is nigh,
And conscience-stricken, looks on Calvary.
—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 2.

your scruples will go together, believe me, by listening to me. In short, we shall manage to make a BLANK COMMUNION for you; for after all, what is it that we ask?—only the APPEARANCE!"

Now, a BLANK COMMUNION means, breaking an unconsecrated wafer!

The abbe-marquis retired with his offers, which were rejected with indignation—but then, the refractory man was dismissed from his place at court. This was but a single isolated fact. Woe to all who found themselves opposed to the interest and principles of Madame de Saint-Dizier or her friends! Sooner or later, directly or indirectly, they felt themselves cruelly stabbed, generally irremediably—some in their dearest connections, others in their credit; some in their honor; others in their official functions; and all by secret action, noiseless, continuous, and latent, in time becoming a terrible and mysterious dissolvent, which invisibly undermined reputations, fortunes, positions the most solidly established, until the moment when all sunk forever into the abyss, amid the surprise and terror of the beholders.

It will now be conceived how under the Restoration the Princess de Saint-Dizier had become singularly influential and

formidable. At the time of the Revolution of July (1830) she had "rallied": and, strangely enough, by preserving some relation of family and of society with persons faithful to the worship of decayed monarchy, people still attributed to the princess much influence and power. Let us mention, at last, that the Prince of Saint-Dizier, having died many years since, his very large personal fortune had descended to his younger brother, the father of Adrienne de Cardoville; and he, having died eighteen months ago, that young lady found herself to be the last and only representative of that branch of the family of the Renneponts.

The Princess of Saint-Dizier awaited her niece in a very large room, rendered dismal by its gloomy green damask. The chairs, etc., covered with similar stuff, were of carved ebony. Paintings of scriptural and other religious subjects, and an ivory crucifix thrown up from a background of black velvet, contributed to give the apartment a lugubrious and austere aspect.

Madame de Saint-Dizier, seated before a large desk, has just finished putting the seals on numerous letters; for she had a very extensive and very diversified corre-

spondence. Though then aged about forty-five, she was still fair. Advancing years had somewhat thickened her shape, which, formerly of distinguished elegance, was still sufficiently handsome to be seen to advantage under the straight folds of her black dress. Her head-dress, very simple, decorated with gray ribbons, allowed her fair, sleek hair to be seen, arranged in broad bands. At first look, people were struck with her dignified though unassuming appearance; and would have vainly tried to discover in her physiognomy, now marked with repentant calmness, any trace of the agitations of her past life. So naturally grave and reserved was she that people could not believe her the heroine of so many intrigues and adventures and gallantry. Moreover, if by chance she ever heard any lightness in conversation, her countenance, since she had come to believe herself a kind of "mother in the Church," immediately expressed candid but grieved astonishment, which soon changed into an air of offended chastity and disdainful pity.

For the rest, her smile, when requisite, was still full of grace, and even of the seducing and resistless sweetness of seeming

good nature. Her large blue eyes, on fit occasions, became affectionate and caressing. But if any one dared to wound or ruffle her pride, gainsay her orders or harm her interests, her countenance, usually placid and serene, betrayed a cold but implacable malignity. Mrs. Grivois entered the cabinet, holding in her hand Florine's report of the manner in which Adrienne de Cardoville had spent the morning.

Mrs. Grivois had been about twenty years in the service of Madame de Saint-Dizier. She knew everything that a lady's-maid could or ought to have known of her mistress in the days of her sowing of wild (being a lady) flowers. Was it from choice that the princess had still retained about her person this so-well-informed witness of the numerous follies of her youth? The world was kept in ignorance of the motive; but one thing was evident; viz., that Mrs. Grivois enjoyed great privileges under the princess, and was treated by her rather as a companion than as a tiring-woman.

"Here are Florine's notes, madame," said Mrs. Grivois, giving the paper to the princess.

"I will examine them presently," said

the princess; "but tell me, is my niece coming? Pending the conference at which she is to be present, you will conduct into her house a person who will soon be here, to inquire for you by my desire."

"Well, madame?"

"This man will make an exact inventory of everything contained in Adrienne's residence. You will take care that nothing is omitted; for that is of very great importance."

"Yes, madame. But should Georgette or Hebe make any opposition?"

"There is no fear; the man charged with taking the inventory is of such a stamp, that when they know him, they will not dare to oppose either his making the inventory, or his other steps. It will be necessary not to fail, as you go along with him, to be careful to obtain certain peculiarities destined to confirm the reports which you have spread for some time past."

"Do not have the slightest doubt, madame. The reports have all the consistency of truth."

"Very soon, then, this Adrienne, so insolent and so haughty, will be crushed and compelled to pray for pardon, and from me."

An old footman opened both of the fold-

ing doors, and announced the Marquis-Abbe d'Aigrigny.

"If Mademoiselle de Cardoville present herself," said the princess to Mrs. Grivois, "you will request her to wait an instant."

"Yes, madame," said the duenna, going out with the servant.

Madame de Saint-Dizier and D'Aigrigny remained alone.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PLOT.

THE Abbe Marquis d'Aigrigny, as the reader has easily divined, was the person already seen in the Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins; whence he had departed for Rome, in which city he had remained about three months. The marquis was dressed in deep mourning, but with his usual elegance. His was not a priestly robe; his black coat, and his waistcoat, tightly gathered in at the waist, set off to great advantage the elegance of his figure: his black cassimere pantaloons disclosed his feet, exactly fitted with laced boots, brilliantly polished. And all traces of his tonsure disappeared in the midst of the slight baldness which whitened slightly the back part of his head. There was nothing in his entire costume,

or aspect, that revealed the priest, except, perhaps, the entire absence of beard, the more remarkable upon so manly a countenance. His chin, newly shaved, rested on a large and elevated black cravat, tied with a military ostentation which reminded the beholder that this abbe-marquis—this celebrated preacher—now one of the most active and influential chiefs of his order, had commanded a regiment of hussars upon the Restoration, and had fought in aid of the Russians against France.

Returned to Paris only this morning, the marquis had not seen the princess since his mother, the Dowager Marchioness d'Aigrigny, had died near Dunkirk, upon an estate belonging to Madame de Saint-Dizier, while vainly calling for her son to alleviate her last moments; but the order to which M. d'Aigrigny had thought fit to sacrifice the most sacred feelings and duties of nature, having been suddenly transmitted to him from Rome, he had immediately set out for that city, though not without hesitation, which was remarked and denounced by Rodin; for the love of M. d'Aigrigny for his mother had been the only pure feeling that had invariably distinguished his life.

When the servant had discreetly with-

drawn with Mrs. Grivois, the marquis quickly approached the princess, held out his hand to her, and said with a voice of emotion:

"Hermina, have you not concealed something in your letters? In her last moments did not my mother curse me?"

"No, no, Frederick, compose yourself. She had anxiously desired your presence. Her ideas soon became confused. But in her delirium it was still for you that she called."

"Yes," said the marquis, bitterly; "her maternal instinct doubtless assured her that my presence could have saved her life."

"I entreat you to banish these sad recollections," said the princess, "this misfortune is irreparable."

"Tell me for the last time, truly, did not my absence cruelly affect my mother? Had she no suspicion that a more imperious duty called me elsewhere?"

"No, no, I assure you. Even when her reason was shaken, she believed that you had not yet had time to come to her. All the sad details which I wrote to you upon this painful subject are strictly true. Again, I beg of you to compose yourself."

"Yes, my conscience ought to be easy;

for I have fulfilled my duty in sacrificing my mother. Yet I have never been able to arrive at that complete detachment from natural affection which is commanded to us by those awful words: 'He who hates not his father and his mother, even with his soul, cannot be my disciple.' "*

"Doubtless, Frederick," said the princess, "these renunciations are painful. But, in return, what influence, what power!"

"It is true," said the marquis, after a moment's silence. "What ought not to be sacrificed in order to reign in secret over the all-powerful of the earth, who lord it in full day? This journey to Rome, from which I have just returned, has given me a new idea of our formidable power. For, Hermina, it is Rome which is the culminating point, overlooking the fairest and broadest quarters of

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* With regard to this text, a commentary upon it will be found in the *Constitutions of the Jesuits*, as follows: "In order that the habit of language may come to the help of the sentiments, it is wise not to say, 'I *have* parents, or I *have* brothers'; but to say, 'I *had* parents; I *had* brothers.'"—*General Examination*, p. 29; *Constitutions.*—Paulin, 1843. Paris.

the globe, made so by custom, by tradition, or by faith. Thence can our workings be embraced in their full extent. It is an uncommon view to see from its height the myriad tools, whose personality is continually absorbed into the immovable personality of our Order. What a might we possess! Verily, I am always swayed with admiration, ay, almost frightened, that man once thinks, wishes, believes, and acts as he alone lists, until soon ours, he becomes but a human shell; its kernel of intelligence, mind, reason, conscience, and free will, shriveled within him, dry and withered by the habit of mutely, fearingly bowing under mysterious tasks, which shatter and slay everything spontaneous in the human soul? Then do we infuse in such spiritless clay, speechless, cold, and motionless as corpses, the breath of our Order, and, lo! the dry bones stand up and walk, acting and executing, though only within the limits which are circled round them evermore. Thus do they become mere limbs of the gigantic trunk, whose impulses they mechanically carry out, while ignorant of the design, like the stone-cutter who shapes out a stone, unaware if it be for cathedral or bagnio."

In so speaking, the marquis's features wore an incredible air of proud and domineering haughtiness.

"Oh, yes! this power is great, most great," observed the princess; "all the more formidable because it moves in a mysterious way over minds and consciences."

"Ay, Hermina," said the marquis: "I have had under my command a magnificent regiment. Very often have I experienced the energetic and exquisite enjoyment of command! At my word, my squadrons put themselves in action; bugles blared; my officers, glittering in golden embroidery, galloped everywhere to repeat my orders: all my brave soldiers, burning with courage, and cicatrized by battles, obeyed my signal; and I felt proud and strong, holding as I did, so to speak, in my hands, the force and valor of each and all combined into one being of resistless strength and invincible intrepidity—of all of which I was as much the master, as I mastered the rage and fire of my war-horse! Ay! that was greatness. But now, in spite of the misfortunes which have befallen our Order, I feel myself a thousand times more ready for action, more authoritative, more strong, and more

daring, at the head of our mute and black-robed militia, who only think and wish, or move and obey, mechanically, according to my will. On a sign, they scatter over the surface of the globe, gliding stealthily into households under guise of confessing the wife or teaching the children; into family affairs by hearing the dying avowals —up to the throne through the quaking conscience of a credulous crowned coward; ay, even to the chair of the Pope himself, living manifesto of the Godhead though he is, by the services rendered him or imposed by him. Is not this secret rule made to kindle or glut the wildest ambition, as it reaches from the cradle to the grave, from the laborer's hovel to the royal palace, from palace to the papal chair? What career in all the world presents such splendid openings? what unutterable scorn ought I not feel for the bright butterfly life of early days, when we made so many envy us? Don't you remember, Hermina?" he added, with a bitter smile.

"You are right, perfectly right, Frederick!" replied the princess quickly. "How little soever we may reflect, with what contempt do we not think upon the past! I, like you, often compare it with the present; and then what satisfaction I feel at having

followed your counsels! For, indeed, without you, I should have played the miserable and ridiculous part which a woman always plays in her decline from having been beautiful and surrounded by admirers. What could I have done at this hour? I should have vainly striven to retain around me a selfish and ungrateful world of gross and shameful men, who court women only that they may turn them to the service of their passions, or to the gratification of their vanity. It is true that there would have remained to me the resource of what is called keeping an agreeable house for all others—yes, in order to entertain them, be visited by a crowd of the indifferent, to afford opportunities of meeting to amorous young couples, who, following each other from parlor to parlor, come not to your house but for the purpose of being together; a very pretty pleasure, truly, that of harboring those blooming, laughing, amorous youths, who look upon the luxury and brilliancy with which one surrounds them as if they were their due upon bonds to minister to their pleasure, and to their impudent amours!"

Her words were so stinging, and such hateful envy sat upon her face, that she

betrayed the intense bitterness of her regrets in spite of herself.

"No, no; thanks to you, Frederick," she continued, "after a last and brilliant triumph, I broke for ever with the world, which would soon have abandoned me, though I was so long its idol and its queen. And I have only changed my queendom. Instead of the dissipated men whom I ruled with a frivolity superior to their own, I now find myself surrounded by men of high consideration, of redoubtable character, and all-powerful, many of whom have governed the state; to them I have devoted myself, as they have devoted themselves to me! It is now only that I really enjoy that happiness of which I ever dreamed. I have taken an active part, and have exercised a powerful influence over the greatest interests of the world; I have been initiated into the most important secrets; I have been able to strike, surely, whosoever scoffed at or hated me; and I have been able to elevate beyond their hopes those who have served or respected and obeyed me."

"There are some madmen, and some so blind, that they imagine that we are struck down, because we ourselves have had to struggle against some misfortunes," said

M. d'Aigrigny, disdainfully, "as if we were not, above all others, securely founded, organized for every struggle, and drew not from our very struggles a new and more vigorous activity. Doubtless the times are bad. But they will become better; and, as you know, it is nearly certain that in a few days (the 13th of February), we shall have at our disposal a means of action sufficiently powerful for re-establishing our influence, which has been temporarily shaken."

"Yes, doubtless this affair of the medals is most important," said the princess.

"I should not have made so much haste to return hither," resumed the abbe, "were it not to act in what will be, perhaps, for us, a very great event."

"But you are aware of the fatality which has once again overthrown projects the most laboriously conceived and matured?"

"Yes; immediately on arriving I saw Rodin."

"And he told you—?"

"The inconceivable arrival of the Indian, and of General Simon's daughters at Cardoville Castle, after a double shipwreck, which threw them upon the coast of Picardy; though it was deemed certain

that the young girls were at Leipsic, and the Indian in Java. Precautions were so well taken, indeed," added the marquis in vexation, "that one would think an invisible power protects this family."

"Happily, Rodin is a man of resources and activity," resumed the princess. "He came here last night, and we had a long conversation."

"And the result of your consultation is excellent," added the marquis: "the old soldier is to be kept out of the way for two days; and his wife's confessor has been posted; the rest will proceed of itself. Tomorrow, the girls need no longer be feared; and the Indian remains at Cardoville, wounded dangerously. We have plenty of time for action."

"But that is not all," continued the princess: "there are still, without reckoning my niece, two persons, who, for our interests, ought not to be found in Paris on the 13th of February."

"Yes, M. Hardy; but his most dear and intimate friend has betrayed him; for, by means of that friend, we have drawn M. Hardy into the South, whence it is impossible for him to return before a month. As for that miserable vagabond workman, surnamed 'Sleepinbuff'!—"

"Fy!" exclaimed the princess, with an expression of outraged modesty.

"That man," resumed the marquis, "is no longer an object of inquietude. Lastly, Gabriel, upon whom our vast and certain hope reposes, will not be left by himself for a single minute until the great day. Everything seems, you see, to promise success; indeed, more so than ever; and it is necessary to obtain this success at any price. It is for us a question of life or death; for, in returning, I stopped at Forli, and there saw the Duke d'Orbano. His influence over the mind of the king is all-powerful—indeed, absolute; and he has completely prepossessed the royal mind. It is with the duke alone, then, that it is possible to treat."

"Well?"

"D'Orbano has gained strength; and he can, I know it, assure to us a legal existence, highly protected, in the dominions of his master, with full charge of popular education. Thanks to such advantages, after two or three years in that country we shall become so deeply rooted, that this very Duke D'Orbano, in his turn, will have to solicit support and protection from us. But at present he has everything in his power; and he puts an absolute condition upon his services."

"What is the condition?"

"Five millions down; and an annual pension of a hundred thousand francs."

"It is very much."

"Nay, but little if it be considered that our foot, once planted in that country, we shall promptly repossess ourselves of that sum, which, after all, is scarcely an eighth part of what the affair of the medals, if happily brought to an issue, ought to assure to the Order."

"Yes, nearly forty millions," said the princess, thoughtfully.

"And again: these five millions that Orbano demands will be but an advance. They will be returned to us in voluntary gifts, by reason even of the increase of influence that we shall acquire from the education of children; through whom we have their families. And yet, the fools hesitate! those who govern see not that, in doing our own business, we do theirs also—that in abandoning education to us (which is what we wish for above all things) we mold the people into that mute and quiet obedience, that servile and brutal submission, which assures the repose of states by the immobility of the mind. They don't reflect that most of the upper and middle classes fear and hate us; don't understand

that (when we have persuaded the mass that their wretchedness is an eternal law, that sufferers must give up hope of relief, that it is a crime to sigh for welfare in this world, since the crown of glory on high is the only reward for misery here), then the stupefied people will resignedly wallow in the mire, all their impatient aspirations for better days smothered, and the volcano blasts blown aside, which made the future of rulers so horrid and so dark! They see not, in truth, that this blind and passive faith which we demand from the mass furnishes their rulers with a bridle with which both to conduct and curb them; while we ask from the happy of the world only some appearances which ought, if they had only the knowledge of their own corruption, to give an increased stimulant to their pleasures."

"It signifies not," resumed the princess; "since, as you say, a great day is at hand, bringing nearly forty millions, of which the Order can become possessed by the happy success of the affair of the medals. We certainly can attempt very great things. Like a lever in your hands, such a means of action would be of incalculable power, in times during which all men buy and sell one another."

"And then," resumed M. d'Aigrigny, with a thoughtful air, "here the reaction continues: the example of France is everything. In Austria and Holland we can rarely maintain ourselves; while the resources of the Order diminish from day to day. We have arrived at a crisis; but it can be made to prolong itself. Thus, thanks to the immense resource of the affair of the medals, we cannot only brave all eventualities, but we can again powerfully establish ourselves, thanks to the offer of the Duke d'Orbano, which we accept; and then, from that unassailable center, our radiations will be incalculable. Ah! the 13th of February!" added M. d'Aigrigny, after a moment of silence, and shaking his head: "the 13th of February, a date perhaps fortunate and famous for our power as that of the council which gave to us (so to say) a new life!"

"And nothing must be spared," resumed the princess, "in order to succeed at any price. Of the six persons whom we have to fear five are or will be out of any condition to hurt us. There remains then only my niece; and you know that I have waited but for your arrival in order to take my last resolution. All my preparations are completed; and this very morning we will begin to act."

"Have your suspicions increased since your last letter?"

"Yes; I am certain that she is more instructed than she wishes to appear; and if so, we shall not have a more dangerous enemy."

"Such has always been my opinion. Thus it is six months since I advised you to take in all cases the measures which you have adopted, in order to provoke, on her part, that demand of emancipation, the consequences of which now render quite easy that which would have been impossible without it."

"At last," said the princess, with an expression of joy, hateful and bitter, "this indomitable spirit will be broken. I am at length about to be avenged of the many insolent sarcasms which I have been compelled to swallow, lest I should awaken her suspicions. I! I to have borne so much till now! for this Adrienne has made it her business (imprudent as she is!) to irritate me against herself!"

"Whosoever offends you, offends me: you know it," said D'Aigrigny, "my hatreds are yours."

"And you yourself!" said the princess, "how many times have you been the butt of her poignant irony!"

"My instincts seldom deceive me. I am certain that this young girl may become a dangerous enemy for us," said the marquis, with a voice painfully broken into short monosyllables.

"And, therefore, it is necessary that she may be rendered incapable of exciting further fear," responded Madame de Saint-Dizier, fixedly regarding the marquis.

"Have you seen Dr. Baleinier, and the sub-guardian, M. Tripeaud?" asked he.

"They will be here this morning. I have informed them of everything."

"Did you find them well disposed to act against her?"

"Perfectly so—and the best is, Adrienne does not at all suspect the doctor. Moreover, a circumstance which appears to me inexplicable has come to our aid."

"What do you allude to?"

"This morning, Mrs. Grivois went, according to my orders, to remind Adrienne that I expected her at noon, upon important business. As she approached the pavilion, Mrs. Grivois saw, or thought she saw, Adrienne come in by the little garden gate."

"What do you tell me? Is it possible? Is there any positive proof of it?" cried the marquis.

"Till now, there is no other proof than the spontaneous declaration of Mrs. Grivois; but while I think of it," said the princess, taking up a paper that lay before her, "here is the report which, every day, one of Adrienne's women makes to me."

"The one that Rodin succeeded in introducing into your niece's service?"

"The same; as this creature is entirely in Rodin's hands, she has hitherto answered our purpose very well. In this report, we shall perhaps find the confirmation of what Mrs. Grivois affirms she saw."

Hardly had the princess glanced at the note, than she exclaimed, almost in terror:

"What do I see? Why, Adrienne is a very demon!"

"What now?"

"The bailiff at Cardoville, having written to my niece to ask her recommendation, informed her at the same time of the stay of the Indian prince at the castle. She knows that he is her relation, and has just written to her old drawing-master, Norval, to set out post with Eastern dresses, and bring Prince Djalma hither—the man that must be kept away from Paris at any cost."

The marquis grew pale, and said to Madame de Saint-Dizier: "If this be not merely one of her whims, the eagerness she displays in sending for this relation hither proves that she knows more than you even suspected. She is 'posted' on the affair of the medals. Have a care—she may ruin all."

"In that case," said the princess, resolutely, "there is no room to hesitate. We must carry things further than we thought, and make an end this very morning."

"Yes, though it is almost impossible."

"Nay, all is possible. The doctor and M. Tripeaud are ours," said the princess, hastily.

"Though I am as sure as you are of the doctor, or of M. Tripeaud, under present circumstances, we must not touch on the question of acting—which will be sure to frighten them at first—until after our interview with your niece. It will be easy, notwithstanding her cleverness, to find out her armor's defect. If our suspicions should be realized—if she is really informed of what it would be so dangerous for her to know—then we must have no scruples, and above all no delay. This very day must see all set at rest. The time for wavering is past."

The Judgment Day! He hears the trumpet's blast;
And, prostrate, owns his Saviour's love at last.
—The Wandering Jew, Vol. 2.

"Have you been able to send for the person agreed on?" asked the princess, after a moment's silence.

"He was to be here at noon. He cannot be long."

"I thought this room would do very well for our purpose. It is separated from the smaller parlor by a curtain only, behind which your man may be stationed."

"Capital!"

"Is he a man to be depended on?"

"Quite so—we have often employed him in similar matters. He is as skillful as discreet."

At this moment a low knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said the princess.

"Dr. Baleinier wishes to know if her Highness the Princess can receive him?" asked the valet-de-chambre.

"Certainly. Beg him to walk in."

"There is also a gentleman that M. l'Abbe appointed to be here at noon, by whose orders I have left him waiting in the oratory."

"'Tis the person in question," said the marquis to the princess. "We must have him in first. 'Twould be useless for Dr. Baleinier to see him at present."

"Show this person in first," said the

princess; "next when I ring the bell you will beg Dr. Baleinier to walk this way; and, if Baron Tripeaud should call, you will bring him here also. After that, I am at home to no one except Mlle. Adrienne." The servant went out.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ADRIENNE'S ENEMIES.

THE Princess de Saint-Dizier's valet soon returned, showing in a little pale man, dressed in black, and wearing spectacles. He carried under his left arm a long black morocco writing-case.

The princess said to this man: "M. l'Abbe, I suppose, has already informed you of what is to be done?"

"Yes, your highness," said the man in a faint, shrill, piping voice, making at the same time a low bow.

"Shall you be conveniently placed in this room?" asked the princess, conducting him to the adjoining apartment, which was only separated from the other by a curtain hung before a doorway.

"I shall do nicely here, your highness," answered the man in spectacles, with a second and still lower bow.

"In that case, sir, please step in here; I will let you know when it is time."

"I shall wait your highness's order."

"And pray remember my instructions," added the marquis, as he unfastened the loops of the curtain.

"You may be perfectly tranquil, M. l'Abbe." The heavy drapery, as it fell, completely concealed the man in spectacles.

The princess touched the bell: some moments after the door opened, and the servant announced a very important personage in this work.

Dr. Baleinier was about fifty years of age, middling size, rather plump, with a full shining, ruddy countenance. His gray hair, very smooth and rather long, parted by a straight line in the middle, fell flat over his temples. He had retained the fashion of wearing short black silk breeches, perhaps because he had a well-formed leg: his garters were fastened with small, golden buckles, as were his shoes of polished morocco leather; his coat, waistcoat, and cravat were black, which gave him rather a clerical appearance; his sleek, white hand was half hidden beneath a cambric ruffle, very closely plaited; on the whole, the gravity of his costume did not seem to exclude a shade of foppery.

His face was acute and smiling; his small gray eye announced rare penetration and sagacity. A man of the world and a man of pleasure, a delicate epicure, witty in conversation, polite to obsequiousness, supple, adroit, insinuating, Baleinier was one of the oldest favorites of the congregational set of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. Thanks to this powerful support, its cause unknown, the doctor, who had been long neglected, in spite of real skill and incontestable merit, found himself, under the Restoration, suddenly provided with two medical sinecures most valuable, and so on after with numerous patients. We must add, that, once under the patronage of the princess, the doctor began scrupulously to observe his religious duties; he communicated once a week, with great publicity, at the high mass in Saint Thomas Aquinas Church.

At the year's end, a certain class of patients, led by the example and enthusiasm of Madame de Saint-Dizier's followers, would have no other physician than Dr. Baleinier, and his practice was now increased to an extraordinary degree. It may be conceived how important it was for the order to have among its "plain clothes members" one of the most popular practitioners of Paris.

A doctor has in some sort a priesthood of his own. Admitted at all hours to the most secret intimacy of families, he knows, guesses, and is able to effect much. Like the priest, in short, he has the ear of the sick and the dying. Now, when he who cares for the health of the body and he who takes charge of the health of the soul understand each other, and render mutual aid for the advancement of a common interest, there is nothing (with certain exceptions) which they may not extract from the weakness and fears of a sick man at the last gasp—not for themselves (the laws forbid it)—but for third parties belonging more or less to the very convenient class of men of straw. Dr. Baleinier was therefore one of the most active and valuable assistant members of the Paris Jesuits.

When he entered the room, he hastened to kiss the princess's hand with the most finished gallantry.

"Always punctual, my dear M. Baleinier."

"Always eager and happy to attend to your highness's orders." Then, turning toward the marquis, whose hand he pressed cordially, he added: "Here we have you then at last. Do you know that three months' absence appears very long to your friends?"

"The time is as long to the absent as to those who remain, my dear doctor. Well! here is the great day. Mdlle. de Cardoville is coming."

"I am not quite easy," said the princess; "suppose she had any suspicion?"

"That's impossible," said M. Baleinier; "we are the best friends in the world. You know that Mdlle. Adrienne has always had great confidence in me. The day before yesterday we laughed a good deal, and as I made some observations to her, as usual, on her eccentric mode of life, and on the singular state of excitement in which I sometimes found her—"

"M. Baleinier never fails to insist on these circumstances, in appearance so insignificant," said Madame de Saint-Dizier to the marquis with a meaning look.

"They are indeed very essential," replied the other.

"Mdlle. Adrienne answered my observations," resumed the doctor, "by laughing at me in the gayest and most witty manner; for I must confess that this young lady has one of the aptest and most accomplished minds I know."

"Doctor, doctor!" said Madame de Saint-Dizier, "no weakness!"

Instead of answering immediately, M.

Baleinier drew his gold snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket, opened it, and took slowly a pinch of snuff, looking all the time at the princess with so significant an air that she appeared quite reassured. "Weakness, madame?" observed he at last, brushing some grains of snuff from his shirt-front with his plump white hand; "did I not have the honor of volunteering to extricate you from this embarrassment?"

"And you are the only person in the world that could render us this important service," said D'Aigrigny.

"Your highness sees, therefore," resumed the doctor, "that I am not likely to show any weakness. I perfectly understand the responsibility of what I undertake: but such immense interests, you told me, were at stake—"

"Yes," said D'Aigrigny, "interests of the first consequence."

"Therefore I did not hesitate," proceeded M. Baleinier; "and you need not be at all uneasy. As a man of taste, accustomed to good society, allow me to render homage to the charming qualities of Mademoiselle Adrienne; when the time for action comes, you will find me quite as willing to do my work."

"Perhaps that moment may be nearer than we thought," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, exchanging a glance with D'Aigrigny.

"I am, and will be, always ready," said the doctor. "I answer for everything that concerns myself. I wish I could be as tranquil on every other point."

"Is not your asylum still as fashionable—as an asylum can well be?" asked Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a half smile.

"On the contrary. I might almost complain of having too many boarders. It is not that. But, while we are waiting for Mademoiselle Adrienne, I will mention another subject, which only relates to her indirectly, for it concerns the person who bought Cardoville Manor, one Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who has taken me for a doctor, thanks to Rodin's able management."

"True," said D'Aigrigny; "Rodin wrote to me on the subject—but without entering into details."

"These are the facts," resumed the doctor. "This Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who was at first considered easy enough to lead, has shown herself very refractory on the head of her conversion. Two spiritual directors have already renounced the task

of saving her soul. In despair, Rodin unslipped little Philippon on her. He is adroit, tenacious, and above all patient in the extreme — the very man that was wanted. When I got Madame de la Sainte-Colombe for a patient, Philippon asked my aid, which he was naturally entitled to. We agreed upon our plan. I was not to appear to know the least in the world; and he was to keep me informed of the variations in the moral state of his penitent, so that I might be able, by the use of very inoffensive medicines — for there was nothing dangerous in the illness —to keep my patient in alternate states of improvement or the reverse, according as her director had reason to be satisfied or displeased—so that he might say to her: 'You see, madame, you are in the good way! Spiritual grace acts upon your bodily health, and you are already better. If, on the contrary, you fall back into evil courses, you feel immediately some physical ail, which is a certain proof of the powerful influence of faith, not only on the soul, but on the body also.' "

"It is doubtless painful," said D'Aigrigny, with perfect coolness, "to be obliged to have recourse to such means to rescue perverse souls from perdition—but we

must needs proportion our modes of action to the intelligence and the character of the individual."

"By the bye, the princess knows," resumed the doctor, "that I have often pursued this plan at St. Mary's Convent, to the great advantage of the soul's peace and health of some of our patients, being extremely innocent. These alternations never exceed the difference between 'pretty well,' and 'not quite so well.' Yet small as are the variations, they act most efficaciously on certain minds. It was thus with Madame de la Sainte-Colombe. She was in such a fair way of recovery, both moral and physical, that Rodin thought he might get Philippon to advise the country for his penitent, fearing that Paris air might occasion a relapse. This advice, added to the desire the woman had to play 'lady of the parish,' induced her to buy Cardoville Manor, a good investment in many respects. But yesterday unfortunate Philippon came to tell me that Madame de la Sainte-Colombe was about to have an awful relapse—moral, of course—for her physical health is now desperately good. The said relapse appears to have been occasioned by an interview she has had with one Jacques Du-

moulin, whom they tell me you know, my dear abbe; he has introduced himself to her, nobody can guess how."

"This Jacques Dumoulin," said the marquis, with disgust, "is one of those men that we employ while we despise. He is a writer full of gall, envy, and hate, qualities that give him a certain unmercifully cutting eloquence. We pay him largely to attack our enemies, though it is often painful to see principles we respect defended by such a pen. For this wretch lives like a vagabond—is constantly in taverns—almost always intoxicated—but, I must own, his power of abuse is inexhaustible, and he is well versed in the most abstruse theological controversies, so that he is sometimes very useful to us."

"Well! though Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is hard upon sixty, it appears that Dumoulin has matrimonial views on her large fortune. You will do well to inform Rodin, so that he may be on his guard against the dark designs of this rascal. I really beg a thousand pardons for having so long occupied you with such a paltry affair—but, talking of St. Mary's Convent," added the doctor, addressing the princess, "may I take the liberty of asking if your highness has been there lately?"

The princess exchanged a rapid glance with D'Aigrigny, and answered: "Oh, let me see! Yes, I was there about a week ago."

"You will find great changes then. The wall that was next to my asylum has been taken down, for they are going to build a new wing and a chapel, the old one being too small. I must say, in praise of Mademoiselle Adrienne," continued the doctor, with a singular smile aside, "that she promised me a copy of one of Raphael's Madonnas for this chapel."

"Really? very appropriate!" said the princess. "But here it is almost noon, and M. Tripeaud has not come."

"He is the deputy-guardian of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, whose property he has managed, as former agent of the count-duke," said the marquis, with evident anxiety, "and his presence here is absolutely indispensable. It is greatly to be desired that his coming should precede that of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who may be here at any moment."

"It is unlucky that his portrait will not do as well," said the doctor, smiling maliciously, and drawing a small pamphlet from his pocket.

"What is that, doctor?" asked the princess.

"One of those anonymous sheets, which are published from time to time. It is called the 'Scourge,' and Baron Tripeaud's portrait is drawn with such faithfulness that it ceases to be satire. It is really quite life-like; you have only to listen. The sketch is entitled:

" 'TYPE OF THE LYNX-SPECIES.'

" 'The Baron Tripeaud. This man, who is as basely humble toward his social superiors as he is insolent and coarse to those who depend upon him—is the living, frightful incarnation of the worse portion of the moneyed and commercial aristocracy—one of the rich and cynical speculators, without heart, faith, or conscience, who would speculate for a rise or fall on the death of his mother, if the death of his mother could influence the price of stocks.

" 'Such persons have all the odious vices of men suddenly elevated, not like those whom honest and patient labor has nobly enriched, but like those who owe their wealth to some blind caprice of fortune, or some lucky cast of the net in the miry waters of stock-jobbing.

" 'Once up in the world, they hate the people—because the people remind them of a mushroom origin of which they are

ashamed. Without pity for the dreadful misery of the masses, they ascribe it wholly to idleness or debauchery, because this calumny forms an excuse for their barbarous selfishness.

"'And this is not all. On the strength of his well-filled safe, mounted on his right of the candidate, Baron Tripeaud insults the poverty and political disfranchisement—

"'Of the officer, who, after forty years of wars and hard service, is just able to live on a scanty pension—

"'Of the magistrate, who has consumed his strength in the discharge of stern and sad duties, and who is not better remunerated in his latter days—

"'Of the learned man, who has made his country illustrious by useful labors; or the professor, who has initiated entire generations in the various branches of human knowledge—

"'Of the modest and virtuous country curate, the pure representative of the gospel, in its charitable, fraternal, and democratic tendencies, etc.

"'In such a state of things how should our shoddy baron of *in-dust-ry* not feel the most sovereign contempt for all that stupid mob of honest folk, who, having

given to their country their youth, their mature age, their blood, their intelligence, their learning, see themselves deprived of the rights which he enjoys, because he has gained a million by unfair and illegal transactions?

" 'It is true that your optimists say to these pariahs of civilization, whose proud and noble poverty cannot be too much revered and honored: "Buy an estate, and you too may be electors and candidates!"

" 'But to come to the biography of our worthy baron—Andrew Tripeaud, the son of a hostler, at a roadside inn—' "

At this instant the folding-doors were thrown open, and the valet announced: "The Baron Tripeaud!"

Dr. Baleinier put his pamphlet into his pocket, made the most cordial bow to the financier, and even rose to give him his hand. The baron entered the room, overwhelming every one with salutations. "I have the honor to attend the orders of your highness the princess. She knows that she may always count upon me."

"I do indeed rely upon you, M. Tripeaud, and particularly under present circumstances."

"If the intentions of your highness the

princess are still the same with regard to Mdlle. de Cardoville—"

"They are still the same, M. Tripeaud, and we meet to-day on that subject."

"Your highness may be assured of my concurrence, as, indeed, I have already promised. I think that the greatest severity must at length be employed, and that even if it were necessary—"

"That is also our opinion," said the marquis, hastily making a sign to the princess, and glancing at the place where the man in spectacles was hidden; "we are all perfectly in harmony. Still, we must not leave any point doubtful, for the sake of the young lady herself, whose interest alone guides us in this affair. We must draw out her sincerity by every possible means."

"Mademoiselle has just arrived from the summer-house, and wishes to see your highness," said the valet, again entering, after having knocked at the door.

"Say that I wait for her," answered the princess; "and now I am at home to no one—without exception. You understand me; absolutely to no one."

Thereupon approaching the curtain behind which the man was concealed, Mme.

de Saint-Dizier gave him the cue—after which she returned to her seat.

It is singular, but during the short space which preceded Adrienne's arrival, the different actors in this scene appeared uneasy and embarrassed, as if they had a vague fear of her coming. In about a minute Mdlle. de Cardoville entered the presence of her aunt.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SKIRMISH.

On entering, Mdlle. de Cardoville threw down upon a chair the gray beaver hat she had worn to cross the garden, and displayed her fine, golden hair, falling on either side of her face in long, light ringlets, and twisted in a broad knot behind her head. She presented herself without boldness, but with perfect ease: her countenance was gay and smiling; her large black eyes appeared even more brilliant than usual. When she perceived the Abbe d'Aigrigny, she started in surprise, and her rosy lips were just touched with a mocking smile. After nodding graciously to the doctor, she passed Baron Tripeaud by without looking at him, and

saluted the princess with a stately obeisance, in the most fashionable style.

Though the walk and bearing of Mdlle. de Cardoville were extremely elegant, and full of propriety and truly feminine grace, there was about her an air of resolution and independence by no means common in women, and particularly in girls of her age. Her movements, without being abrupt, bore no traces of restraint, stiffness, or formality. They were frank and free as her character; full of life, youth, and freshness; and one could easily divine that so buoyant, straightforward, and decided a nature had never been able to conform itself to the rules of an affected rigor.

Strangely enough, though he was a man of the world, a man of great talent, a churchman distinguished for his eloquence, and, above all, a person of influence and authority, the Marquis d'Aigrigny experienced an involuntary, incredible, almost painful uneasiness, in presence of Adrienne de Cardoville. He—generally so much the master of himself, so accustomed to exercise great power—who (in the name of his Order) had often treated with crowned heads on the footing of an equal, felt himself abashed and lowered in the presence of this girl, as remarkable for her

frankness as for her bitting irony. Now, as men who are accustomed to impose their will upon others generally hate those who, far from submitting to their influence, hamper it, and make sport of them, it was no great degree of affection that the marquis bore toward the Princess de Saint-Dizier's niece.

For a long time past, contrary to his usual habit, he had ceased to try upon Adrienne that fascinating address to which he had often owed an irresistible charm; toward her he had become dry, curt, serious, taking refuge in that icy sphere of haughty dignity and rigid austerity which completely hid all those amiable qualities with which he was endowed, and of which, in general, he made such efficient use. Adrienne was much amused at all this, and thereby showed her imprudence—for the most vulgar motives often engender the most implacable hatreds.

From these preliminary observations, the reader will understand the divers sentiments and interests which animated the different actors in the following scene.

Madame de Saint-Dizier was seated in a large arm-chair by one side of the hearth. The Marquis d'Aigrigny was standing before the fire. Dr. Baleinier, seated near

a bureau, was again turning over the leaves of Baron Tripeaud's biography, while the baron appeared to be very attentively examining one of the pictures of sacred subjects suspended from the wall.

"You sent for me, aunt, to talk upon matters of importance?" said Adrienne, breaking the silence which had reigned in the reception-room since her entrance.

"Yes, madame," answered the princess, with a cold and severe mien; "upon matters of the gravest importance."

"I am at your service, aunt. Perhaps we had better walk into your library?"

"It is not necessary. We can talk here." Then, addressing the marquis, the doctor, and the baron, she said to them, "Pray, be seated, gentlemen," and they all took their places round the table.

"How can the subject of our interview interest these gentlemen, aunt?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville, with surprise.

"These gentlemen are old family friends; all that concerns you must interest them, and their advice ought to be heard and accepted by you with respect."

"I have no doubt, aunt, of the bosom friendship of M. d'Aigrigny for our family: I have still less of the profound and disinterested devotion of M. Tripeaud; M.

Baleinier is one of my old friends; still, before accepting these gentlemen as spectators, or, if you will, as confidants of our interview, I wish to know what we are going to talk of before them."

"I thought that, among your many singular pretensions, you had at least those of frankness and courage."

"Really, aunt," said Adrienne, smiling with mock humility, "I have no more pretensions to frankness and courage than you have to sincerity and goodness. Let us admit, once for all, that we are what we are—without pretension."

"Be it so," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a dry tone; "I have long been accustomed to the freaks of your independent spirit. I suppose, then, that, courageous and frank as you say you are, you will not be afraid to speak before such grave and respectable persons as these gentlemen what you would speak to me alone!"

"Is it a formal examination that I am to submit to? if so, upon what subject?"

"It is not an examination; but, as I have a right to watch over you, and as you take the advantage of my weak compliance with your caprices, I mean to put an end to what has lasted too long, and

tell you my irrevocable resolutions for the future, in presence of friends of the family. And, first, you have hitherto had a very false and imperfect notion of my power over you."

"I assure you, aunt, that I have never had any notion, true or false, on the subject—for I have never even dreamed about it."

"That is my own fault; for, instead of yielding to your fancies, I should have made you sooner feel my authority; but the moment is come to submit yourself; the severe censures of my friends have enlightened me in time. Your character is self-willed, independent, stubborn; it must change—either by fair means or by force, understand me, it *shall* change."

At these words, pronounced harshly before strangers, with a severity which did not seem at all justified by circumstances, Adrienne tossed her head proudly; but, restraining herself, she answered with a smile: "You say, aunt, that I shall change. I should not be astonished at it. We hear of such odd conversions."—The princess bit her lips.

"A sincere conversion can never be called odd, as you term it, madame," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, coldly. "It is, on the

contrary, meritorious, and forms an excellent example."

"Excellent?" answered Adrienne: "that depends! For instance, what if one converts defects into vices?"

"What do you mean, madame?" cried the princess.

"I am speaking of myself, aunt; you reproach me with being independent and resolute—suppose I were to become hypocritical and wicked? In truth, I prefer keeping my dear little faults, which I love like spoiled children. I know what I am; I do not know what I might be."

"But you must acknowledge, Mdlle. Adrienne," said Baron Tripeaud, with a self-conceited and sententious air, "that a conversion—"

"I believe," said Adrienne, disdainfully, "that M. Tripeaud is well versed in the conversion of all sorts of property into all sorts of profit, by all sorts of means—but he knows nothing of this matter."

"But, madame," resumed the financier, gathering courage from a glance of the princess, "you forget that I have the honor to be your deputy guardian, and that—"

"It is true that M. Tripeaud has that honor," said Adrienne, with still more haughtiness, and not even looking at the

baron; "I could never tell exactly why. But as it is not now the time to guess enigmas, I wish to know, aunt, the object and end of this meeting?"

"You shall be satisfied, madame. I will explain in a very clear and precise manner. You shall know the plan of conduct that you will have henceforth to pursue; and if you refuse to submit thereto, with the obedience and respect that is due to my orders, I shall at once see what course to take."

It is impossible to give an idea of the imperious tone and stern look of the princess, as she pronounced these words, which were calculated to startle a girl until now accustomed to live in a great measure as she pleased: yet, contrary perhaps to the expectation of Madame de Saint-Dizier, instead of answering impetuously, Adrienne looked her full in the face, and said, laughing: "This is a perfect declaration of war. It's becoming very amusing."

"We are not talking of declarations of war," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, harshly, as if offended by the expressions of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Now, M. l'Abbe!" returned Adrienne, "for an old colonel, you are really too severe upon a jest!—you are so much in-

debted to 'war,' which gave you a French regiment after fighting so long against France—in order to learn, of course, the strength and the weakness of her enemies."

On these words, which recalled painful remembrances, the marquis colored; he was going to answer, but the princess exclaimed: "Really, madame, your behavior is quite intolerable!"

"Well, aunt, I acknowledge I was wrong. I ought not to have said this is very amusing—for it is not so, at all; but it is at least very curious—and perhaps," added the young girl, after a moment's silence, "perhaps very audacious—and audacity pleases me. As we are upon this subject, and you talk of a plan of conduct to which I must conform myself, under pain of (interrupting herself)—under pain of what, I should like to know, aunt?"

"You shall know. Proceed."

"I will, in the presence of these gentlemen, also declare, in a very plain and precise manner, the determination that I have come to. As it required some time to prepare for its execution, I have not spoken of it sooner, for you know I am not in the habit of saying, 'I will do so and so!' but I do it."

"Certainly; and it is just this habit of

culpable independence of which you must break yourself."

"Well, I had intended only to inform you of my determination at a later period; but I cannot resist the pleasure of doing so to-day, you seem so well disposed to hear and receive it. Still, I would beg of you to speak first: it may just so happen that our views are precisely the same."

"I like better to see you thus," said the princess. "I acknowledge at least the courage of your pride, and your defiance of all authority. You speak of audacity —yours is indeed great."

"I am at least decided to do that which others in their weakness dare not—but which I dare. This, I hope, is clear and precise."

"Very clear, very precise," said the princess, exchanging a glance of satisfaction with the other actors in this scene. "The positions being thus established, matters will be much simplified. I have only to give you notice, in your own interest, that this is a very serious affair—much more so than you imagine—and that the only way to dispose me to indulgence is to substitute, for the habitual arrogance and irony of your language, the modesty and respect becoming a young lady."

Adrienne smiled, but made no reply. Some moments of silence, and some rapid glances exchanged between the princess and her three friends, showed that these encounters, more or less brilliant in themselves, were to be followed by a serious combat.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had too much penetration and sagacity not to remark that the Princess de Saint-Dizier attached the greatest importance to this decisive interview. But she could not understand how her aunt could hope to impose her absolute will upon her: the threat of coercive measures appearing with reason a mere ridiculous menace. Yet, knowing the vindictive character of her aunt, the secret power at her disposal, and the terrible vengeance she had sometimes exacted — reflecting, moreover, that men in the position of the marquis and the doctor would not have come to attend this interview without some weighty motive—the young lady paused for a moment before she plunged into the strife.

But soon, the very presentiment of some vague danger, far from weakening her, gave her new courage to brave the worst, to exaggerate, if that were possible, the independence of her ideas, and uphold,

come what might, the determination that she was about to signify to the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER XL.

THE REVOLT.

"MADAME," said the princess to Adrienne de Cardoville, in a cold, severe tone, "I owe it to myself, as well as to these gentlemen, to recapitulate, in a few words, the events that have taken place for some time past. Six months ago, at the end of the mourning for your father, you, being eighteen years old, asked for the management of your fortune, and for emancipation from control. Unfortunately, I had the weakness to consent. You quitted the house, and established yourself in the extension, far from all superintendence. Then began a train of expenditures, each one more extravagant than the last. Instead of being satisfied with one or two waiting women, taken from that class from which they are generally selected, you chose governesses for lady-companions, whom you dressed in the most ridiculous and costly fashion. It is true, that, in the solitude of your pavilion, you yourself chose to wear, one after another, cos-

tumes of different ages. Your foolish fancies and unreasonable whims have been without end and without limit: not only have you never fulfilled your religious duties, but you have actually had the audacity to profane one of your rooms, by rearing in the center of it a species of pagan altar, on which is a group in marble representing a youth and a girl" — the princess uttered these words as if they would burn her lips—"a work of art, if you will, but a work in the highest degree unsuitable to a person of your age. You pass whole days entirely secluded in your pavilion, refusing to see any one; and Dr. Baleinier, the only one of my friends in whom you seem to have retained some confidence, having succeeded by much persuasion in gaining admittance, has frequently found you in so very excited a state that he has felt seriously uneasy with regard to your health. You have always insisted on going out alone, without rendering any account of your actions to any one. You have taken delight in opposing, in every possible way, your will to my authority. Is all this true?"

"The picture of my past is not much flattered," said Adrienne, smiling, "but it is not altogether unlike."

"So you admit, madame," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, laying stress on his words, "that all the facts stated by your aunt are scrupulously true?"

Every eye was turned toward Adrienne, as if her answer would be of extreme importance.

"Yes, M. l'Abbe," said she; "I live openly enough to render this question superfluous."

"These facts are therefore admitted," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, turning toward the doctor and the baron.

"These facts are completely established," said M. Tripeaud, in a pompous voice.

"Will you tell me, aunt," asked Adrienne, "what is the good of this long preamble?"

"This long preamble, madame," resumed the princess, with dignity, "exposes the past in order to justify the future."

"Really, aunt, such mysterious proceedings are a little in the style of the answers of the Cumæan Sybil. They must be intended to cover something formidable."

"Perhaps, mademoiselle—for to certain characters nothing is so formidable as duty and obedience. Your character is one of those inclined to revolt—"

"I freely acknowledge it, aunt—and it will always be so, until duty and obedience come to me in a shape that I can respect and love."

"Whether you respect and love my orders or not, madame," said the princess, in a curt harsh voice, "you will, from to-day, from this moment, learn to submit blindly and absolutely to my will. In one word, you will do nothing without my permission: it is necessary, I insist upon it, and so I am determined it shall be."

Adrienne looked at her aunt for a second, and then burst into so free and sonorous a laugh that it rang for quite a time through the vast apartment. D'Aigrigny and Baron Tripeaud started in indignation. The princess looked angrily at her niece. The doctor raised his eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands over his waistcoat with a sanctimonious sigh.

"Madame," said the Abbe d'Aigrigny, "such fits of laughter are highly unbecoming. Your aunt's words are serious, and deserve a different reception."

"Oh, sir!" said Adrienne, recovering herself, "it is not my fault if I laugh. How can I maintain my gravity, when I hear my aunt talking of blind submission to her orders? Is the swallow, accustomed

to fly upward and enjoy the sunshine, fledged to live with the mole in darkness?"

At this answer D'Aigrigny affected to stare at the other members of this kind of family council with blank astonishment.

"A swallow? what does she mean?" asked the abbe of the baron, making a sign which the latter understood.

"I do not know," answered Tripeaud, staring in his turn at the doctor. "She spoke too of a mole. It is quite unheard-of—incomprehensible."

"And so, madame," said the princess, appearing to share in the surprise of the others, "this is the reply that you make to me?"

"Certainly," answered Adrienne, astonished herself that they should pretend not to understand the simile of which she had made use, accustomed as she was to speak in figurative language.

"Come, come, madame," said Dr. Baleinier, smiling good-humoredly, "we must be indulgent. My dear Mdlle. Adrienne has naturally so uncommon and excitable a nature! She is really the most charming mad woman I know; I have told her so a hundred times, in my position of an old friend, which allows such freedom."

"I can conceive that your attachment

makes you indulgent—but it is not the less true, doctor," said D'Aigrigny, as if reproaching him for taking the part of Mdlle. de Cardoville, "that such answers to serious questions are most extravagant."

"The evil is, that mademoiselle does not seem to comprehend the serious nature of this conference," said the princess, harshly. "She will perhaps understand it better when I have given her my orders."

"Let us hear these orders, aunt," replied Adrienne, as, seated on the other side of the table, opposite to the princess, she leaned her small, dimpled chin in the hollow of her pretty hand, with an air of graceful mockery, charming to behold.

"From to-morrow forward," resumed the princess, "you will quit the summer-house that you at present inhabit, you will discharge your women, and come and occupy two rooms in this house, to which there will be no access except through my apartment. You will never go out alone. You will accompany me to the services of the Church. Your emancipation terminates, in consequence of your prodigality duly proven. I will take charge of all your expenses, even to the ordering of your clothes, so that you may be properly and modestly dressed. Until your ma-

jority (which will be indefinitely postponed, by means of the intervention of a family-council), you will have no money at your own disposal. Such is my resolution."

"And certainly your resolution can only be applauded, madame," said Baron Tripeaud; "we can but encourage you to show the greatest firmness, for such disorders must have an end."

"It is more than time to put a stop to such scandals," added the abbe.

"Eccentricity and exaltation of temperament may excuse many things," ventured to observe the smooth-tongued doctor.

"No doubt," replied the princess dryly to Baleinier, who played his part to perfection; "but then, doctor, the requisite measures must be taken with such characters."

Madame de Saint-Dizier had expressed herself in a firm and precise manner; she appeared convinced of the possibility of putting her threats into execution. M. Tripeaud and D'Aigrigny had just now given their full consent to the words of the princess. Adrienne began to perceive that something very serious was in contemplation, and her gayety was at once replaced by an air of bitter irony and offended independence.

She rose abruptly, and colored a little; her rosy nostrils dilated, her eyes flashed fire, and, as she raised her head, she gently shook the fine, wavy, golden hair, with a movement of pride that was natural to her. After a moment's silence, she said to her aunt in a cutting tone: "You have spoken of the past, madame; I also will speak a few words concerning it, since you force me to do so, though I may regret the necessity. I quitted your dwelling because it was impossible for me to live longer in this atmosphere of dark hypocrisy and black treachery."

"Madame," said D'Aigrigny, "such words are as violent as they are unreasonable."

"Since you interrupt me, sir," said Adrienne, hastily, as she fixed her eyes on the abbe, "tell me what examples did I meet with in my aunt's house?"

"Excellent examples, madame."

"Excellent, sir? Was it because I saw there, every day, her conversion keep pace with your own?"

"Madame, you forget yourself!" cried the princess, becoming pale with rage.

"Madame, I do not forget—I remember, like other people: that is all. I had no relation of whom I could ask an asylum.

I wished to live alone. I wished to enjoy my revenues—because I chose rather to spend them myself, than to see them wasted by M. Tripeaud."

"Madame," cried the baron, "I cannot imagine how you can presume—"

"Sir!" said Adrienne, reducing him to silence by a gesture of overwhelming lordliness, "I speak of you—not to you. I wished to spend my income," she continued, "according to my own tastes. I embellished the retreat that I had chosen. Instead of ugly, ill-taught servants, I selected girls, pretty and well brought up, though poor. Their education forbade their being subjected to any humiliating servitude, though I have endeavored to make their situation easy and agreeable. They do not serve me, but render me service—I pay them, but I am obliged to them—nice distinctions that your highness will not understand, I know. Instead of seeing them badly or ungracefully dressed, I have given them clothes that suit their charming faces well, because I like whatever is young and fair. Whether I dress myself one way or the other concerns only my looking-glass. I go out alone, because I like to follow my fancy. I do not go to mass—but, if I had still a

mother, I would explain to her my devotions, and she would kiss me none the less tenderly. It is true that I have raised a pagan altar to youth and beauty, because I adore God in all that He has made fair and good, noble and grand—because, morn and evening, my heart repeats the fervent and sincere prayer: 'Thanks, my Creator! thanks!' — Your highness says that M. Baleinier has often found me in my solitude, a prey to a strange excitement: yes, it is true; for it is then that, escaping in thought from all that renders the present odious and painful to me, I find refuge in the future—it is then that magical horizons spread far before me—it is then that such splendid visions appear to me, as make me feel myself rapt in a sublime and heavenly ecstasy, as if I no longer appertained to earth!"

As Adrienne pronounced these last words with enthusiasm, her countenance appeared transfigured, so resplendent did it become. In that moment she had lost sight of all that surrounded her.

"It is then," she resumed, with spirit soaring higher and higher, "that I breathe a pure air, reviving and free—yes, free—above all, free—and so salubrious, so grateful to the soul!—Yes, instead of seeing my

sisters painfully submit to a selfish, humiliating, brutal dominion, which entails upon them the seductive vices of slavery, the graceful fraud, the enchanting perfidy, the caressing falsehood, the contemptuous resignation, the hateful obedience—I behold them, my noble sisters! worthy and sincere because they are free, faithful and devoted because they have liberty to choose—neither imperious nor base, because they have no master to govern or to flatter—cherished and respected, because they can withdraw from a disloyal hand their hand, loyally bestowed. Oh, my sisters! my sisters! I feel it. These are not merely consoling visions—they are sacred hopes."

Carried away, in spite of herself, by the excitement of her feelings, Adrienne paused for a moment, in order to return to earth; she did not perceive that the other actors in this scene were looking at each other with an air of delight.

"What she says there is excellent," murmured the doctor in the princess's ear, next to whom he was seated; "were she in league with us, she would not speak differently."

"It is only by excessive harshness," added D'Aigrigny, "that we shall bring her to the desired point."

But it seemed as if the vexed emotion of Adrienne had been dissipated by the contact of the generous sentiments she had just uttered. Addressing Baleinier with a smile, she said: "I must own, doctor, that there is nothing more ridiculous than to yield to the current of certain thoughts, in the presence of persons incapable of understanding them. This would give you a fine opportunity to make game of that exaltation of mind for which you sometimes reproach me. To let myself be carried away by transports at so serious a moment!—for, verily, the matter in hand seems to be serious. But you see, good M. Baleinier, when an idea comes into my head I can no more help following it out than I could refrain from running after butterflies when I was a little girl."

"And heaven only knows whither these brilliant butterflies of all colors," said M. Baleinier, smiling with an air of paternal indulgence, "that are passing through your brain, are likely to lead you. Oh, madcap, when will she be as reasonable as she is charming?"

"This very instant, my good doctor," replied Adrienne. "I am about to cast off my reveries for realities, and speak plain and positive language, as you shall hear."

Upon which, addressing her aunt, she continued: "You have imparted to me your resolution, madame; I will now tell you mine. Within a week, I shall quit the pavilion that I inhabit for a house which I have arranged to my taste, where I shall live after my own fashion. I have neither father nor mother, and I owe no account of my actions to any but myself."

"Upon my word, mademoiselle," said the princess, shrugging her shoulders, "you talk nonsense. You forget that society has inalienable moral rights which we are bound to enforce. And we shall not neglect them, depend upon it."

"So, madame, it is you, and M. d'Aigrigny, and M. Tripeaud, that represent the morality of society! This appears to me very fine. Is it because M. Tripeaud has considered (I must acknowledge it) my fortune as his own? Is it because—"

"Now, really, madame—" began Tripeaud.

"In good time, madame," said Adrienne to her aunt, without noticing the baron, "as the occasion offers, I shall have to ask you for explanations with regard to certain interests, which have hitherto, I think, been concealed from me."

These words of Adrienne made D'Aigri-

gny and the princess start, and then rapidly exchange a glance of uneasiness and anxiety. Adrienne did not seem to perceive it, but thus continued: "To have done with your demands, madame, here is my final resolve. I shall live where and how I please. I think that, if I were a man, no one would impose on me, at my age, the harsh and humiliating guardianship you have in view, for living as I have lived till now—honestly, freely, and generously, in the sight of all."

"This idea is absurd! is madness!" cried the princess. "To wish to live thus alone is to carry immorality and immodesty to their utmost limits."

"If so, madame," said Adrienne, "what opinion must you entertain of so many poor girls, orphans like myself, who live alone and free, as I wish to live? They have not received, as I have, a refined education, calculated to raise the soul, and purify the heart. They have not wealth, as I have, to protect them from the evil temptations of misery; and yet they live honestly and proudly in their distress."

"Vice and virtue do not exist for such tag-rag vermin!" cried Baron Tripeaud, with an expression of anger and hideous disdain.

"Madame, you would turn away a lackey that would venture to speak thus before you," said Adrienne to her aunt, unable to conceal her disgust, "and yet you oblige me to listen to such speeches!"

The Marquis d'Aigrigny touched M. Tripeaud with his knee under the table, to remind him that he must not express himself in the princess's parlors in the same manner as he would in the lobbies of the Exchange. To repair the baron's coarseness, the abbe thus continued: "There is no comparison, mademoiselle, between people of the class you name, and a young lady of your rank."

"For a Catholic priest, M. l'Abbe, that distinction is not very Christian," replied Adrienne.

"I know the purport of my words, madame," answered the abbe, dryly; "besides, the independent life that you wish to lead, in opposition to all reason, may tend to very serious consequences to you. Your family may one day wish to see you married—"

"I will spare my family that trouble, sir; if I marry at all, I will choose for myself, which also appears to me reasonable enough. But, in truth, I am very little tempted by that heavy chain which selfish-

ness and brutality rivet forever about our necks."

"It is indecent, madame," said the princess, "to speak so lightly of such an institution."

"Before you, especially, madame; I beg pardon for having shocked your highness! You fear that my independent manner of living will frighten away all wooers; but that is another reason for persisting in my independence, for I detest wooers. I only hope that they may have the very worst opinion of me, and there is no better means of effecting that object than to appear to live as they live themselves. I rely upon my whims, my follies, my sweet faults, to preserve me from the annoyance of any matrimonial hunting."

"You will be quite satisfied on that head," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, "if unfortunately the report should gain credit that you have carried the forgetfulness of all duty and decency to such a height as to return home at eight o'clock in the morning. So I am told is the case —but I cannot bring myself to believe such an enormity."

"You are wrong, madame, for it is quite true."

"So you confess it?" cried the princess.

"I confess all that I do, madame. I came home this morning at eight o'clock."

"You hear, gentlemen!" ejaculated the princess.

"Oh!" said M. d'Aigrigny, in a bass voice.

"Ah!" said the baron, in a treble key.

"Oh!" muttered the doctor, with a deep sigh.

On hearing these lamentable exclamations, Adrienne seemed about to speak, perhaps to justify herself; but her lip speedily assumed a curl of contempt, which showed that she disdained to stoop to any explanation.

"So it is true," said the princess. "Oh, wretched girl, you had accustomed me to be astonished at nothing; but, nevertheless, I doubted the possibility of such conduct. It required your impudent and audacious reply to convince me of the fact."

"Madame, lying has always appeared to me more impudent than to speak the truth."

"And where had you been, madame? and for what?"

"Madame," said Adrienne, interrupting her aunt, "I never speak false—but neither do I speak more than I choose; and then, again, it were cowardice to defend myself

from a revolting accusation. Let us say no more about it: your importunities on this head will be altogether vain. To resume: you wish to impose upon me a harsh and humiliating restraint; I wish to quit the house I inhabit, to go and live where I please, at my own fancy. Which of us two will yield remains to be seen. Now for another matter: this mansion belongs to me! As I am about to leave it, I am indifferent whether you continue to live here or not; but the ground-floor is uninhabited. It contains, besides the reception-rooms, two complete sets of apartments; I have let them for some time."

"Indeed!" said the princess, looking at D'Aigrigny with intense surprise. "And to whom," she added ironically, "have you disposed of them?"

"To three members of my family."

"What does all this mean?" said Mme. de Saint-Dizier, more and more astonished.

"It means, madame, that I wish to offer a generous hospitality to a young Indian prince, my kinsman on my mother's side. He will arrive in two or three days, and I wish to have the rooms ready to receive him."

"You hear, gentlemen?" said D'Aigri-

gny to the doctor and Tripeaud, with an affectation of profound stupor.

"It surpasses all one could imagine!" exclaimed the baron.

"Alas!" observed the doctor, benignantly, "the impulse is generous in itself—but the mad little head crops out!"

"Excellent!" said the princess. "I cannot prevent you, madame, from announcing the most extravagant designs; but it is presumable that you will not stop short in so fair a path. Is that all?"

"Not quite, your highness. I learned this morning that two of my female relations, also on my mother's side—poor children of fifteen—orphan daughters of Marshal Simon—arrived yesterday from a long journey, and are now with the wife of the brave soldier who brought them to France from the depths of Siberia."

At these words from Adrienne, D'Aigrigny and the princess could not help starting suddenly, and staring at each other with affright, so far were they from expecting that Mdlle. de Cardoville was informed of the coming of Marshal Simon's daughters. This discovery was like a thunder-clap to them.

"You are no doubt astonished at seeing me so well informed," said Adrienne;

"fortunately, before I have done, I hope to astonish you still more. But to return to these daughters of Marshal Simon: your highness will understand that it is impossible for me to leave them in charge of the good people who have afforded them a temporary asylum. Though this family is honest and hard-working, it is not the place for them. I shall go and fetch them hither, and lodge them in apartments on the ground-floor, along with the soldier's wife, who will do very well to take care of them."

Upon these words, D'Aigrigny and the baron looked at each other, and the baron exclaimed: "Decidedly, she's out of her head."

Without a word to Tripeaud, Adrienne continued: "Marshal Simon cannot fail to arrive at Paris shortly. Your highness perceives how pleasant it will be to be able to present his daughters to him, and prove that they have been treated as they deserve. To-morrow morning I shall send for milliners and mantua-makers, so that they may want for nothing. I desire their surprised father, on his return, to find them every way beautiful. They are pretty, I am told, as angels—but I will endeavor to make little Cupids of them."

"At last, madame, you must have finished?" said the princess, in a sardonic and deeply irritated tone, while D'Aigrigny, calm and cold in appearance, could hardly dissemble his mental anguish.

"Try again!" continued the princess, addressing Adrienne. "Are there no more relations that you wish to add to this interesting family group? Really a queen could not act with more magnificence."

"Right! I wish to give my family a royal reception—such as is due to the son of a king, and the daughters of the Duke de Ligny. It is well to unite other luxuries of life with the luxury of the hospitable heart."

"The maxim is assuredly generous," said the princess, becoming more and more agitated; "it is only a pity that you do not possess the mines of El Dorado to make it practicable."

"It was on the subject of a mine, said to be a rich one, that I also wished to speak to your highness. Could I find a better opportunity? Though my fortune is already considerable, it is nothing to what may come to our family at any moment. You will perhaps excuse, therefore, what you are pleased to call my royal prodigalities."

D'Aigrigny's dilemma became momentarily more and more thorny. The affair of the medals was so important that he had concealed it even from Dr. Baleinier, though he had called in his services to forward immense interests. Neither had Tripeaud been informed of it, for the princess believed that she had destroyed every vestige of those papers of Adrienne's father which might have put him on the scent of this discovery. The abbe, therefore, was not only greatly alarmed that Mdlle. de Cardoville might be informed of this secret, but he trembled lest she should divulge it.

The princess, sharing the alarms of D'Aigrigny, interrupted her niece by exclaiming: "Madame, there are certain family affairs which ought to be kept secret, and, without exactly understanding to what you allude, I must request you to change the subject."

"What, madame, are we not here a family party? Is that not sufficiently evident by the somewhat ungracious things that have been here said?"

"No matter, madame, when affairs of interest are concerned, which are more or less disputable, it is perfectly useless to speak of them without the documents laid before every one."

"And of what have we been speaking this hour, madame, if not of affairs of interest? I really do not understand your surprise and embarrassment."

"I am neither surprised nor embarrassed, madame; but for the last two hours you have obliged me to listen to so many new and extravagant things that a little amaze is very permissible."

"I beg your highness's pardon, but you are very much embarrassed," said Adrienne, looking fixedly at her aunt, "and M. d'Aigrigny also—which confirms certain suspicions that I have not had the time to clear up. Have I then guessed rightly?" she added, after a pause. "We will see—"

"Madame, I command you to be silent," cried the princess, no longer mistress of herself.

"Oh, madame!" said Adrienne, "for a person who has in general so much command of her feelings, you compromise yourself strangely."

Providence (as some will have it) came to the aid of the princess and the Abbe d'Aigrigny at this critical juncture. A valet entered the room; his countenance bore such marks of fright and agitation that the princess exclaimed as soon as she

saw him: "Why, Dubois, what is the matter?"

"I have to beg pardon, your highness, for interrupting you against your express orders, but a police inspector demands to speak with you instantly. He is below stairs, and the yard is full of policemen and soldiers."

Notwithstanding the profound surprise which this new incident occasioned her, the princess, determining to profit by the opportunity thus afforded, to concert prompt measures with D'Aigrigny on the subject of Adrienne's threatened revelations, rose, and said to the abbe: "Will you be so obliging as to accompany me, M. d'Aigrigny, for I do not know what the presence of this commissary of police may signify."

D'Aigrigny followed the speaker into the next room.

CHAPTER XLI.

TREACHERY.

THE Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by D'Aigrigny, and followed by the servant, stopped short in the next room to that in which had remained Adrienne, Tripeaud and the doctor.

"Where is the commissary?" asked the princess of the servant, who had just before announced to her the arrival of that magistrate.

"In the blue saloon, madame."

"My compliments, and beg him to wait for me a few moments."

The man bowed and withdrew. As soon as he was gone, Madame de Saint-Dizier approached hastily M. d'Aigrigny, whose countenance, usually firm and haughty, was now pale and agitated.

"You see," cried the princess in a hurried voice, "Adrienne knows all. What shall we do?—what?"

"I cannot tell," said the abbe, with a fixed and absent look. "This disclosure is a terrible blow to us."

"Is all, then, lost?"

"There is only one means of safety," said M. d'Aigrigny—"the doctor."

"But how?" cried the princess. "So sudden? this very day?"

"Two hours hence it will be too late; ere then, this infernal girl will have seen Marshal Simon's daughters."

"But—Frederick!—it is impossible! M. Baleinier will never consent. I ought to have been prepared beforehand—as we intended, after to-day's examination."

"No matter," replied the abbe, quickly; "the doctor must try at any hazard."

"But under what pretext?"

"I will try and find one."

"Suppose you were to find a pretext, Frederick, and we could act immediately —nothing would be ready down there."

"Be satisfied: they are always ready there, by habitual foresight."

"How instruct the doctor on the instant?" resumed the princess.

"To send for him would be to rouse the suspicions of your niece," said M. d'Aigrigny, thoughtfully; "and we must avoid that before everything."

"Of course," answered the princess; "her confidence in the doctor is one of our greatest resources."

"There is a way," said the abbe quickly; "I will write a few words in haste to Baleinier; one of your people can take the note to him, as if it came from without—from a patient dangerously ill."

"An excellent idea!" cried the princess. "You are right. Here—upon this table—there is everything necessary for writing. Quick! quick!—But will the doctor succeed?"

"In truth, I scarcely dare to hope it," said the marquis, sitting down at the table

with repressed rage. "Thanks to this examination going beyond our hopes, which our man, hidden behind the curtain, has faithfully taken down in shorthand—thanks to the violent scenes, which would necessarily have occurred to-morrow and the day after—the doctor, by fencing himself round with all sorts of clever precautions, would have been able to act with the most complete certainty. But to ask this of him to-day, on the instant! Hermina—it is folly to think of!" The marquis threw down the pen which he held in his hand; then he added, in a tone of bitter and profound irritation: "At the very moment of success—to see all our hopes destroyed! Oh, the consequences of all this are incalculable. Your niece will be the cause of the greatest mischief—oh! the greatest injury to us."

It is impossible to describe the expression of deep rage and implacable hatred with which D'Aigrigny uttered these last words.

"Frederick," cried the princess with anxiety, as she clasped her hands strongly around the abbe's, "I conjure you, do not despair! The doctor is fertile in resources, and he is *so* devoted to us. Let us at least make the attempt."

"Well—it is at least a chance," said the abbe, taking up the pen again.

"Should it come to the worst," said the princess, "and Adrienne go this evening to fetch General Simon's daughters, she may perhaps no longer find them."

"We cannot hope for that. It is impossible that Rodin's orders should have been so quickly executed. We should have been informed of it."

"It is true. Write then to the doctor; I will send you Dubois, to carry your letter. Courage, Frederick! we shall yet be too much for that ungovernable girl." Madame de Saint-Dizier added, with concentrated rage: "Oh, Adrienne! Adrienne! you shall pay dearly for your insolent sarcasms, and the anxiety you have caused us."

As she went out, the princess turned toward M. d'Aigrigny, and said to him: "Wait for me here. I will tell you the meaning of this visit of the police, and we will go in together."

The princess disappeared. D'Aigrigny dashed off a few words, with a trembling hand.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE SNARE.

After the departure of Madame de Saint-Dizier and the marquis, Adrienne had remained in her aunt's apartment with M. Baleinier and Baron Tripeaud.

On hearing of the commissary's arrival, Mdlle. de Cardoville had felt considerable uneasiness; for there could be no doubt that, as Agricola had apprehended, this magistrate was come to search the hotel and extension, in order to find the smith, whom he believed to be concealed there.

Though she looked upon Agricola's hiding place as a very safe one, Adrienne was not quite tranquil on his account; so in the event of any unfortunate accident, she thought it a good opportunity to recommend the refugee to the doctor, an intimate friend, as we have said, of one of the most influential ministers of the day. So, drawing near to the physician, who was conversing in a low voice with the baron, she said to him in her softest and most coaxing manner: "My good M. Baleinier, I wish to speak a few words with you."

She pointed to the deep recess of one of the windows.

"I am at your orders, madame," answered the doctor, as he rose to follow Adrienne to the recess.

M. Tripeaud, who, no longer sustained by the abbe's presence, dreaded the young lady as he did fire, was not sorry for this diversion. To keep up appearances, he stationed himself before one of the sacred pictures, and began again to contemplate it, as if there were no bounds to his admiration.

When Mdlle. de Cardoville was far enough from the baron not to be overheard by him, she said to the physician, who, all smiles and benevolence, waited for her to explain: "My good doctor, you are my friend, as you were my father's. Just now, notwithstanding the difficulty of your position, you had the courage to show yourself my only partisan."

"Not at all, madame; do not go and say such things!" cried the doctor, affecting a pleasant kind of anger. "Plague on't! you would get me into a pretty scrape; so pray be silent on that subject. Vade retro Satanas!—which means: get thee behind me, charming little demon that you are!"

"Do not be afraid," answered Adrienne.

with a smile; "I will not compromise you. Only allow me to remind you, that you have often made me offers of service, and spoken to me of your devotion."

"Put me to the test—and you will see if I do not keep my promises."

"Well, then! give me a proof on the instant," said Adrienne, quickly.

"Capital! this is how I like to be taken at my word. What can I do for you?"

"Are you still very intimate with your friend the minister?"

"Yes; I am just treating him for a loss of voice, which he always has the day they put questions to him in the house. He likes it better."

"I want you to obtain from him something very important for me."

"For you? pray, what is it?"

At this instant, the valet entered the room, delivered a letter to M. Baleinier, and said to him: "A footman just brought this letter for you, sir; it is very pressing."

The physician took the letter, and the servant went out.

"This is one of the inconveniences of merit," said Adrienne, smiling; "they do not leave you a moment's rest, my poor doctor."

"Do not speak of it, madame," said the physician, who could not conceal a start

of amazement as he recognized the writing of D'Aigrigny; "these patients think we are made of iron, and have monopolized the health which they so much need. They really have no mercy. With your permission, madame," added M. Baleinier, looking at Adrienne before he unsealed the letter.

Mdlle. de Cardoville answered by a graceful nod. Marquis d'Aigrigny's letter was not long; the doctor read it at a single glance, and, notwithstanding his habitual prudence, he shrugged his shoulders, and said hastily: "To-day!—why, it's impossible. He is mad."

"You speak no doubt of some poor patient who has placed all his hopes in you —who waits and calls for you at this moment. Come, my dear M. Baleinier, do not reject his prayer. It is so sweet to justify the confidence we inspire."

There was at once so much analogy, and such contradiction, between the object of this letter, written just before by Adrienne's most implacable enemy, and these words of commiseration which she spoke in a touching voice, that Dr. Baleinier himself could not help being struck with it. He looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with an almost embarrassed air, as he replied: "I am indeed speaking of one of my pa-

tients, who counts much upon me—a great deal too much—for he asks me to do an impossibility. But why do you feel so interested in an unknown person?"

"If he is unfortunate, I know enough to interest me. The person for whom I ask your assistance with the minister, was quite as little known to me; and now I take the deepest interest in him. I must tell you, that he is the son of the worthy soldier who brought Marshal Simon's daughters from the heart of Siberia."

"What! he is—"

"An honest workman, the support of his family; but I must tell you all about it—this is how the affair took place."

The confidential communication which Adrienne was going to make to the doctor was cut short by Madame de Saint-Dizier, who, followed by M. d'Aigrigny, opened abruptly the door. An expression of infernal joy, hardly concealed beneath a semblance of extreme indignation, was visible in her countenance.

M. d'Aigrigny threw rapidly, as he entered the apartment, an inquiring and anxious glance at M. Baleinier. The doctor answered by a shake of the head. The abbe bit his lips with silent rage; he had built his last hopes upon the doctor, and his projects seemed now forever annihi-

lated, notwithstanding the new blow which the princess had in reserve for Adrienne.

"Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a sharp, hurried voice, for she was nearly choking with wicked pleasure, "gentlemen, pray be seated! I have some new and curious things to tell you on the subject of this young lady." She pointed to her niece, with a look of ineffable hatred and disdain.

"My poor child, what is the matter now?" said M. Baleinier, in a soft, wheedling tone, before he left the window where he was standing with Adrienne. "Whatever happens, count upon me!" And the physician went to seat himself between M. d'Aigrigny and M. Tripeaud.

At her aunt's insolent address, Mdlle. de Cardoville had proudly lifted her head. The blood rushed to her face, and irritated at the new attacks with which she was menaced, she advanced to the table where the princess was seated, and said in an agitated voice to M. Baleinier: "I shall expect you to call on me as soon as possible, my dear doctor. You know that I wish particularly to speak with you."

Adrienne made one step toward the armchair, on which she had left her hat. The princess rose abruptly, and exclaimed: "What are you doing, madame?"

"I am about to retire. Your highness has expressed to me your will, and I have told you mine. It is enough."

She took her hat. Madame de Saint-Dizier, seeing her prey about to escape, hastened toward her niece, and, in defiance of all propriety, seized her violently by the arm with a convulsive grasp, and bade her, "Remain!"

"Fie, madame!" exclaimed Adrienne, with an accent of painful contempt, "have we sunk so low?"

"You wish to escape—you are afraid!" resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, looking at her disdainfully from head to foot.

With these words "you are afraid," you could have made Adrienne de Cardoville walk into a fiery furnace. Disengaging her arm from her aunt's grasp, with a gesture full of nobleness and pride, she threw down the hat upon the chair, and, returning to the table, said imperiously to the princess: "There is something even stronger than the disgust with which all this inspires me—the fear of being accused of cowardice. Go on, madame! I am listening!"

With her head raised, her color somewhat heightened, her glance half veiled by a tear of indignation, her arms folded over

her bosom, which heaved in spite of herself with deep emotion, and her little foot beating convulsively on the carpet, Adrienne looked steadily at her aunt. The princess wished to infuse, drop by drop, the poison with which she was swelling, and make her victim suffer as long as possible, feeling certain that she could not escape. "Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a forced voice, "this has occurred: I was told that the commissary of police wished to speak with me; I went to receive this magistrate; he excused himself, with a troubled air, for the nature of the duty he had to perform. A man, against whom a warrant was out, had been seen to enter the garden-house."

Adrienne started; there could be no doubt that Agricola was meant. But she recovered her tranquillity when she thought of the security of the hiding-place she had given him.

"The magistrate," continued the princess, "asked my consent to search the hotel and extension, to discover this man. It was his right. I begged him to commence with the garden-house, and accompanied him. Notwithstanding the improper conduct of mademoiselle, it never, I confess, entered my head for a moment

that she was in any way mixed up with this police business. I was deceived."

"What do you mean, madame?" cried Adrienne.

"You shall know all, madame," said the princess, with a triumphant air, "in good time. You were in rather too great a hurry just now to show yourself so proud and satirical. Well! I accompanied the commissary in his search; we came to the summer-house; I leave you to imagine the stupor and astonishment of the magistrate on seeing three creatures dressed up like actresses. At my request, the fact was noted in the official report; for it is well to reveal such extravagances to all whom it may concern."

"The princess acted very wisely," said Tripeaud, bowing; "it is well that the authorities should be informed of such matter."

Adrienne, too much interested in the fate of the workman to think of answering Tripeaud or the princess, listened in silence, and strove to conceal her uneasiness.

"The magistrate," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, "began by a severe examination of these young girls, to learn if any man had, with their knowledge, been introduced into the house; with incredible

effrontery, they answered that they had seen nobody enter."

"The true-hearted, honest girls!" thought Mademoiselle de Cardoville, full of joy; "the poor workman is safe! the protection of Dr. Baleinier will do the rest."

"Fortunately," continued the princess, "one of my women, Mrs. Grivois, had accompanied me. This excellent person, remembering to have seen mademoiselle return home at eight o'clock in the morning, remarked with much simplicity to the magistrate that the man whom they sought might probably have entered by the little garden gate, left open, accidentally, by mademoiselle."

"It would have been well, madame," said Tripeaud, "to have caused to be noted also in the report that Mademoiselle had returned home at eight o'clock in the morning."

"I do not see the necessity for this," said the doctor, faithful to his part; "it would have been quite foreign to the search carried on by the commissary."

"But, doctor—" said Tripeaud.

"But, baron," resumed M. Baleinier, in a firm voice, "that is my opinion."

"It was not mine, doctor," said the prin-

cess; "like M. Tripeaud, I considered it important to establish the fact by an entry in the report, and I saw, by the confused and troubled countenance of the magistrate, how painful it was to register the scandalous conduct of a young person placed in so high a position in society."

"Certainly, madame," said Adrienne, losing patience, "I believe your modesty to be about equal to that of this candid commissary of police; but it seems to me that your mutual innocence was alarmed a little too soon. You might, and ought to have reflected, that there was nothing extraordinary in my coming home at eight o'clock, if I had gone out at six."

"The excuse, though somewhat tardy, is at least cunning," said the princess, spitefully.

"I do not excuse myself, madame," said Adrienne; "but as M. Baleinier has been kind enough to speak a word in my favor, I give the possible interpretation of a fact, which it would not become me to explain in your presence."

"The fact will stand, however, in the report," said Tripeaud, "until the explanation is given."

The Abbe d'Aigrigny, his forehead rest-

ing on his hand, remained as if a stranger to this scene; he was too much occupied with his fears at the consequences of the approaching interview between Mdlle. de Cardoville and Marshal Simon's daughters —for there seemed no possibility of using force to prevent Adrienne from going out that evening.

Madame de Saint-Dizier went on: "The fact which so greatly scandalized the commissary is nothing compared to what I yet have to tell you, gentlemen. We had searched all parts of the pavilion without finding any one, and were just about to quit the bed-chamber, for we had taken this room the last, when Mrs. Grivois pointed out to us that one of the golden moldings of a panel did not appear to come quite home to the wall. We drew the attention of the magistrate to this circumstance; his men examined, touched, felt—the panel flew open!—and then—can you guess what we discovered? But, no! it is too odious, too revolting; I dare not even—"

"Then I dare, madame," said Adrienne, resolutely, though she saw with the utmost grief that the retreat of Agricola was discovered; "I will spare your highness's candor the recital of this new scandal, and

yet what I am about to say is in nowise intended as a justification."

"It requires one, however," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a disdainful smile; "a man concealed by you in your own bedroom."

"A man concealed in her bedroom!" cried the Marquis d'Aigrigny, raising his head with apparent indignation, which only covered a cruel joy.

"A man! in the bedroom of mademoiselle!" added Baron Tripeaud. "I hope this also was inserted in the report."

"Yes, yes, baron," said the princess with a triumphant air.

"But this man," said the doctor, in a hypocritical tone, "must have been a robber? Any other supposition would be in the highest degree improbable. This explains itself."

"Your indulgence deceives you, M. Baleinier," answered the princess, dryly.

"We know the sort of thieves," said Tripeaud; "they are generally young men, handsome, and very rich."

"You are wrong, sir," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier. "Mademoiselle does not raise her views so high. She proves that a dereliction from duty may be ignoble as well as criminal. I am no longer aston-

ished at the sympathy which was just now professed for the lower orders. It is the more touching and affecting, as the man concealed by her was dressed in a blouse."

"A blouse!" cried the baron, with an air of extreme disgust; "then he is one of the common people? It really makes one's hair stand on end."

"The man is a working smith—he confessed it," said the princess; "but not to be unjust—he is really a good-looking fellow. It was doubtless that singular worship which mademoiselle pays to the beautiful—"

"Enough, madame, enough!" said Adrienne suddenly, for, hitherto disdaining to answer, she had listened to her aunt with growing and painful indignation; "I was just now on the point of defending myself against one of your odious insinuations—but I will not a second time descend to any such weakness. One word only, madame; has this honest and worthy artisan been arrested?"

"To be sure, he has been arrested and taken to prison, under a strong escort. Does not that pierce your heart?" sneered the princess, with a triumphant air. "Your tender pity for this interesting smith must indeed be very great, since it

deprives you of your sarcastic assurance."

"Yes, madame; for I have something better to do than to satirize that which is utterly odious and ridiculous," replied Adrienne, whose eyes grew dim with tears at the thought of the cruel hurt to Agricola's family. Then, putting her hat on, and tying the strings, she said to the doctor: "M. Baleinier, I asked you just now for your interest with the minister."

"Yes, madame; and it will give me great pleasure to act on your behalf."

"Is your carriage below?"

"Yes, madame," said the doctor, much surprised.

"You will be good enough to accompany me immediately to the minister's. Introduced by you, he will not refuse me the favor, or rather the act of justice, that I have to solicit."

"What, mademoiselle!" said the princess; "do you dare take such a course without my orders, after what has just passed? It is really quite unheard-of."

"It confounds one," added Tripeaud; "but we must not be surprised at anything."

The moment Adrienne asked the doctor if his carriage was below, D'Aigrigny started. A look of intense satisfaction

flashed across his countenance, and he could hardly repress the violence of his delight, when, darting a rapid and significant glance at the doctor, he saw the latter respond to it by twice closing his eyelids in token of comprehension and assent.

When therefore the princess resumed, in an angry tone, addressing herself to Adrienne: "Madame, I forbid you leaving the house!" — D'Aigrigny said to the speaker, with a peculiar inflection of the voice: "I think, your highness, we may trust the lady to the doctor's care."

The marquis pronounced these words in so significant a manner that the princess, having looked by turns at the physician and D'Aigrigny, understood it all, and her countenance grew radiant with joy.

Not only did this pass with extreme rapidity, but the night was already almost come, so that Adrienne, absorbed in painful thoughts with regard to Agricola, did not perceive the different signals exchanged between the princess, the doctor, and the abbe. Even had she done so, they would have been incomprehensible to her.

Not wishing to have the appearance of yielding too readily to the suggestion of the marquis, Madame de Saint-Dizier resumed: "Though the doctor seems to me

to be far too indulgent to mademoiselle, I might not see any great objection to trusting her with him; but that I do not wish to establish such a precedent, for henceforward she must have no will but mine."

"Madame," said the physician gravely, feigning to be somewhat shocked by the words of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, "I do not think I have been too indulgent to mademoiselle—but only just. I am at her orders, to take her to the minister if she wishes it. I do not know what she intends to solicit, but I believe her incapable of abusing the confidence I repose in her, or of making me support a recommendation undeserved."

Adrienne, much moved, extended her hand cordially to the doctor, and said to him: "Rest assured, my excellent friend, that you will thank me for the step I am taking, for you will assist in a noble action."

Tripeaud, who was not in the secret of the new plans of the doctor and the abbe, in a low voice faltered to the latter, with a stupefied air, "What! will you let her go?"

"Yes, yes," answered D'Aigrigny abruptly, making a sign that he should listen to the princess, who was about to speak.

Advancing toward her niece, she said to her in a slow and measured tone, laying a peculiar emphasis on every word: "One moment more, mademoiselle — one last word in presence of these gentlemen. Answer me! Notwithstanding the heavy charges impending over you, are you still determined to resist my formal commands?"

"Yes, madame."

"Notwithstanding the scandalous exposure which has just taken place, you still persist in withdrawing yourself from my authority?"

"Yes, madame."

"You refuse positively to submit to the regular and decent mode of life which I would impose upon you?"

"I have already told you, madame, that I am about to quit this dwelling, in order to live alone and after my own fashion."

"Is that your final decision?"

"It is my last word."

"Reflect! the matter is serious. Beware!"

"I have given your highness my last word, and I never speak it twice."

"Gentlemen, you hear all this?" resumed the princess; "I have tried in vain all that was possible to conciliate. Made-

moiselle will have only herself to thank for the measures to which this audacious revolt will oblige me to have recourse."

"Be it so, madame," replied Adrienne. Then, addressing M. Baleinier, she said quickly to him: "Come, my dear doctor, I am dying with impatience. Let us set out immediately. Every minute lost may occasion bitter tears to an honest family."

So saying, Adrienne left the room precipitately with the physician. One of the servants called for M. Baleinier's carriage. Assisted by the doctor, Adrienne mounted the step, without perceiving that he said something in a low whisper to the footman that opened the coach-door.

When, however, he was seated by the side of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and the door was closed upon them, he waited for about a second, and then called out in a loud voice to the coachman: "To the house of the minister, by the private entrance!" The horses started at a gallop.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A FALSE FRIEND.

NIGHT had set in dark and cold. The sky, which had been clear till the sun went down, was now covered with gray and lurid clouds; a strong wind raised here and there, in circling eddies, the snow that was beginning to fall thick and fast.

The lamps threw a dubious light into the interior of Dr. Baleinier's carriage, in which he was seated alone with Adrienne de Cardoville. The charming countenance of the latter, faintly illumined by the lamps beneath the shade of her little gray hat, looked doubly white and pure in contrast with the dark lining of the carriage, which was now filled with that sweet, delicious, and almost voluptuous perfume which hangs about the garments of young women of taste. The attitude of the girl, seated next to the doctor, was full of grace. Her slight and elegant figure, imprisoned in her high-necked dress of blue cloth, imprinted its wavy outline on the soft cushion against which she leaned; her little feet, crossed one upon the other, and

stretched rather forward, rested upon a thick bear-skin which carpeted the bottom of the carriage. In her hand, which was ungloved and dazzlingly white, she held a magnificently embroidered handkerchief, with which, to the great astonishment of M. Baleinier, she dried her eyes, now filled with tears.

Yes; Adrienne wept, for she now felt the reaction from the painful scenes through which she had passed at the Saint-Dizier House; to the feverish and nervous excitement, which had till then sustained her, had succeeded a sorrowful dejection. Resolute in her independence, proud in her disdain, implacable in her irony, audacious in her resistance to unjust oppression, Adrienne was yet endowed with the most acute sensibility, which she always dissembled, however, in the presence of her aunt and those who surrounded her.

Notwithstanding her courage, no one could have been less masculine, less of a virago, than Mdlle. de Cardoville. She was essentially womanly, but as a woman, she knew how to exercise great empire over herself, the moment that the least mark of weakness on her part would have rejoiced or emboldened her enemies.

The carriage had rolled onward for some

minutes; but Adrienne, drying her tears in silence, to the doctor's great astonishment, had not yet uttered a word.

"What, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne?" said M. Baleinier, truly surprised at her emotion; "what! you, that were just now so courageous, weeping?"

"Yes," answered Adrienne, in an agitated voice; "I weep in presence of a friend; but, before my aunt—oh! never."

"And yet, in that long interview, your stinging replies—"

"Ah me! do you think that I resigned myself with pleasure to that war of sarcasm? Nothing is more painful to me than such combats of bitter irony, to which I am forced by the necessity of defending myself from this woman and her friends. You speak of my courage; it does not consist, I assure you, in the display of wicked feelings—but in the power to repress and hide all that I suffer, when I hear myself treated so grossly—in the presence too of people that I hate and despise — when, after all, I have never done them any harm, and have only asked to be allowed to live alone, freely and quietly, and see those about me happy."

"That's where it is: they envy your happiness, and that which you bestow upon others."

"And it is my aunt," cried Adrienne, with indignation, "my aunt, whose whole life has been one long scandal, that accuses me in this revolting manner!—as if she did not know me proud and honest enough never to make a choice of which I should be ashamed! Oh! if I ever love, I shall proclaim it, I shall be proud of it; for love, as I understand it, is the most glorious feeling in the world. But, alas!" continued Adrienne, with redoubled bitterness, "of what use are truth and honor, if they do not secure you from suspicions which are as absurd as they are odious?" So saying, she again pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Come, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said M. Baleinier, in a voice full of the softest unction, "be calm—it is all over now. You have in me a devoted friend."

As he pronounced these last words, he blushed in spite of his diabolical craft.

"I know you are my friend," said Adrienne; "I shall never forget that, by taking my part to-day, you exposed yourself to the resentment of my aunt—for I am not ignorant of her power, which is very great, alas! for evil."

"As for that," said the doctor, affecting a profound indifference, "we medical men are pretty safe from personal enmities."

"Nay, my dear M. Baleinier! Mme. de Saint-Dizier and her friends never forgive," said the young girl, with a shudder. "It needed all my invincible aversion, my innate horror for all that is base, cowardly, and perfidious, to induce me to break so openly with her. But if death itself were the penalty, I could not hesitate; and yet," she added, with one of those graceful smiles which gave such a charm to her beautiful countenance, "yet I am fond of life; if I have to reproach myself with anything, it is that I would have it too bright, too fair, too harmonious; but then, you know, I am resigned to my faults."

"Well, come, I am more tranquil," said the doctor, gayly; "for you smile—that is a good sign."

"It is often the wisest course; and yet, ought I smile, after the threats that my aunt has held out to me? Still, what can she do? what is the meaning of this kind of family council? Did she seriously think that the advice of a M. d'Aigrigny or a M. Tripeaud could have influenced me? And then she talked of rigorous measures. What measures can she take; do you know?"

"I think, between ourselves, that the

princess only wished to frighten you, and hopes to succeed by persuasion. She has the misfortune to fancy herself a mother of the Church, and dreams of your conversion," said the doctor maliciously, for he now wished to tranquilize Adrienne at any cost; "but let us think no more about it. Your fine eyes must shine with all their luster to fascinate the minister that we are going to see."

"You are right, dear doctor; we ought always avoid grief, for it has the disadvantage of making us forget the sorrows of others. But here am I, availing myself of your kindness, without even telling you what I require."

"Luckily, we shall have plenty of time to talk over it, for our statesman lives at some distance."

"In two words, here's the mystery," answered Adrienne. "I told you what reasons I had to interest myself in that honest workman. This morning he came to me in great grief, to inform me that he was compromised by some songs he had written (for he is a poet), and that, though innocent, he was threatened with an arrest; and if they put him into prison, his family, whose sole support he is, would die of hunger. Therefore he came to beg me to

procure bail for him, so that he might be left at liberty to work. I promised, immediately, thinking of your interest with the minister; for, as they were already in pursuit of the poor lad, I chose to conceal him in my residence, and you know how my aunt has twisted that action. Now tell me, do you think that, by means of your recommendation, the minister will grant me the freedom of this workman, bail being given for the same?"

"No doubt of it. There will not be the shadow of a difficulty — especially when you have explained the facts to him with that eloquence of the heart which you possess in perfection."

"Do you know, my dear Dr. Baleinier, why I have taken the resolution (which is perhaps a strange one) to ask you to accompany me to the minister's?"

"Why, doubtless, to recommend your friend in a more effective manner."

"Yes—but also to put an end, by a decisive step, to the calumnies which my aunt will be sure to spread with regard to me, and which she has already, you know, had inserted in the report of the commissary of police. I have preferred to address myself at once, frankly and openly, to a man placed in a high social position.

I will explain all to him, who will believe me, because truth has an accent of its own."

"All this, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne, is wisely planned. You will, as the saw says, kill two birds with one stone—or rather, you will obtain by one act of kindness two acts of justice; you will destroy a dangerous calumny, and restore a worthy youth to liberty."

"Come," said Adrienne, laughing, "thanks to this pleasing prospect, my light heart has returned."

"How true that in life," said the doctor, philosophically, "everything depends on the point of view."

Adrienne was so completely ignorant of the forms of a constitutional government, and had so blind a confidence in the doctor, that she did not doubt for an instant what he told her. She therefore resumed with joy: "What happiness it will be! when I go to fetch the daughters of Marshal Simon, to be able to console this workman's mother, who is now perhaps in a state of cruel anxiety, at not seeing her son return home!"

"Yes, you will have this pleasure," said M. Baleinier, with a smile; "for we will solicit and intrigue to such purpose that

the good mother may learn from you the release of her son before she even knows that he has been arrested."

"How kind, how obliging you are!" said Adrienne. "Really, if the motive were not so serious, I should be ashamed of making you lose so much precious time, my dear M. Baleinier. But I know your heart."

"I have no other wish than to prove to you my profound devotion, my sincere attachment," said the doctor, inhaling a pinch of snuff. But at the same time he cast an uneasy glance through the window, for the carriage was just crossing the Place de l'Odeon, and, in spite of the snow, he could see the front of the Odeon theater brilliantly illuminated. Now Adrienne, who had just turned her head toward that side, might perhaps be astonished at the singular road they were taking.

In order to draw off her attention by a skillful diversion, the doctor exclaimed suddenly: "Bless me! I had almost forgotten."

"What is the matter, M. Baleinier?" said Adrienne, turning hastily toward him.

"I had forgotten a thing of the highest importance, in regard to the success of our petition."

"What is it, please?" asked the young girl, anxiously.

M. Baleinier gave a cunning smile. "Every man," said he, "has his weakness—ministers even more than others. The one we are going to visit has the folly to attach the utmost importance to his title, and the first impression would be unfavorable, if you did not lay great stress on the *Minister*."

"Is that all, my dear M. Baleinier?" said Adrienne, smiling in her turn. 'I will even go as far as your excellency, which is, I believe, one of his adopted titles."

"Not now—but that is no matter; if you could even slide in a my lord or two, our business would be done at once."

"Be satisfied! since there are upstart ministers as well as city-turned gentlemen, I will remember Moliere's M. Jourdain, and feed full the gluttonous vanity of your friend."

"I give him up to you, for I know he will be in good hands," replied the physician, who rejoiced to see that the carriage had now entered those dark streets which lead from the Place de l'Odeon to the Pantheon district; "I do not wish to find fault with the minister for being proud,

since his pride may be of service to us on this occasion."

"These petty devices are innocent enough," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, "and I confess that I do not scruple to have recourse to them." Then, leaning toward the door-sash, she added: "Gracious! how sad and dark are these streets. What wind, what snow! In which quarter are we?"

"What! are you so ungrateful that you do not recognize, by the absence of shops, your dear quarter of the Faubourg Saint Germain?"

"I imagined we had quitted it long ago."

"I thought so too," said the physician, leaning forward as if to ascertain where they were, "but we are still there. My poor coachman, blinded by the snow, which is beating against his face, must have gone wrong just now—but we are all right again. Yes, I perceive we are in the Rue Saint Guillaume—not the gayest of streets by the way—but, in ten minutes we shall arrive at the minister's private entrance, for intimate friends like myself enjoy the privilege of escaping the honors of a grand reception."

Mdlle. de Cardoville, like most carriage-people, was so little acquainted with

certain streets of Paris, as well as with the customs of men in office, that she did not doubt for a moment the statements of Baleinier, in whom she reposed the utmost confidence.

When they left the Saint-Dizier House, the doctor had upon his lips a question which he hesitated to put, for fear of endangering himself in the eyes of Adrienne. The latter had spoken of important interests, the existence of which had been concealed from her. The doctor, who was an acute and skillful observer, had quite clearly remarked the embarrassment and anxiety of the princess and D'Aigrigny. He no longer doubted that the plot directed against Adrienne—one in which he was the blind agent, in submission to the will of the Order—related to interests which had been concealed from him, and which, for that very reason, he burned to discover; for every member of the dark conspiracy to which he belonged had necessarily acquired the odious vices inherent to spies and informers—envy, suspicion, and jealous curiosity.

It is easy to understand, therefore, that Dr. Baleinier, though quite determined to serve the projects of D'Aigrigny, was yet very anxious to learn what had been kept

from him. Conquering his irresolution, and finding the opportunity favorable, and no time to be lost, he said to Adrienne, after a moment's silence: "I am going perhaps to ask you a very indiscreet question. If you think it such, pray do not answer."

"Nay—go on, I entreat you."

"Just now—a few minutes before the arrival of the commissary of police was announced to your aunt—you spoke, I think, of some great interests, which had hitherto been concealed from you."

"Yes, I did so."

"These words," continued M. Baleinier, speaking slowly and emphatically, "appeared to make a deep impression on the princess."

"An impression so deep," said Adrienne, "that sundry suspicions of mine were changed to certainty."

"I need not tell you, my charming friend," resumed M. Baleinier, in a bland tone, "that if I remind you of this circumstance, it is only to offer you my services, in case they should be required. If not—and there is the shadow of impropriety in letting me know more—forget that I have said a word."

Adrienne became serious and pensive,

and, after a silence of some moments, she thus answered Dr. Baleinier: "On this subject, there are some things that I do not know—others that I may tell you—others again that I must keep from you; but you are so kind to-day that I am happy to be able to give you a new mark of confidence."

"Then I wish to know nothing," said the doctor, with an air of humble deprecation, "for I should have the appearance of accepting a kind of reward; while I am paid a thousand times over by the pleasure I feel in serving you."

"Listen," said Adrienne, without attending to the delicate scruples of Dr. Baleinier; "'I have powerful reasons for believing that an immense inheritance must, at no very distant period, be divided between the members of my family, all of whom I do not know—for, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, those from whom we are descended were dispersed in foreign countries, and experienced a great variety of fortunes."

"Really!" cried the doctor, becoming extremely interested. "Where is this inheritance, in whose hands?"

"I do not know."

"Now how will you assert your rights?"

"That I shall learn soon."

"Who will inform you of it?"

"That I may not tell you."

"But how did you find out the existence of this inheritance?"

"That also I may not tell you," returned Adrienne, in a soft and melancholy tone, which remarkably contrasted with the habitual vivacity of her conversation. "It is a secret—a strange secret—and in those moments of excitement, in which you have sometimes surprised me, I have been thinking of extraordinary circumstances connected with this secret, which awakened within me lofty and magnificent ideas."

Adrienne paused and was silent, absorbed in her own reflections. Baleinier did not seek to disturb her. In the first place, Mdlle. de Cardoville did not perceive the direction the coach was taking; secondly, the doctor was not sorry to ponder over what he had just heard. With his usual perspicuity, he saw that the Abbe d'Aigrigny was concerned in this inheritance, and he resolved instantly to make a secret report on the subject; either M. d'Aigrigny was acting under the instructions of the Order, or by his own impulse; in the one event, the report of the

doctor would confirm a fact; in the other, it would reveal one.

For some time, therefore, the lady and Dr. Baleinier remained perfectly silent, no longer even disturbed by the noise of the wheels, for the carriage now rolled over a thick carpet of snow, and the streets had become more and more deserted. Notwithstanding his crafty treachery, notwithstanding his audacity and the blindness of his dupe, the doctor was not quite tranquil as to the result of his machinations. The critical moment approached, and the least suspicion roused in the mind of Adrienne by any inadvertence on his part, might ruin all his projects.

Adrienne, already fatigued by the painful emotions of the day, shuddered from time to time, as the cold became more and more piercing; in her haste to accompany Dr. Baleinier, she had neglected to take either shawl or mantle.

For some minutes the coach had followed the line of a very high wall, which, seen through the snow, looked white against a black sky. The silence was deep and mournful. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and the footman went to knock at a large gateway; he first gave two rapid knocks, and then one other at a long interval.

Adrienne did not notice the circumstance, for the noise was not loud, and the doctor had immediately begun to speak, to drown with his voice this species of signal.

"Here we are at last," said he gayly to Adrienne; "you must be very winning—that is, you must be yourself."

"Be sure I will do my best," replied Adrienne, with a smile; then she added, shivering in spite of herself: "How dreadfully cold it is! I must confess, my dear Dr. Baleinier, that when I have been to fetch my poor little relations from the house of our workman's mother, I shall be truly glad to find myself once more in the warmth and light of my own cheerful rooms, for you know my aversion to cold and darkness."

"It is quite natural," said the doctor, gallantly; "the most charming flowers require the most light and heat."

While the doctor and Mdlle. de Cardoville exchanged these few words, a heavy gate had turned creaking upon its hinges, and the carriage had entered a courtyard. The physician got down first, to offer his arm to Adrienne.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MINISTER'S CABINET.

THE carriage had stopped before some steps covered with snow, which led to a vestibule lighted by a lamp. The better to ascend the steps, which were somewhat slippery, Adrienne leaned upon the doctor's arm.

"Dear me! how you tremble," said he.

"Yes," replied she, shuddering, "I feel deadly cold. In my haste, I came out without a shawl. But how gloomy this house appears!" she added, pointing to the entrance.

"It is what you call the minister's private house, the sanctum sanctorum, whither our statesman retires far from the sound of the profane," said Dr. Baleinier, with a smile. "Pray come in!" and he pushed open the door of a large hall, completely empty.

"They are right in saying," resumed Dr. Baleinier, who covered his secret agitation with an appearance of gayety, "that a minister's house is like nobody else's. Not a footman—not a page, I should say—to be found in the ante-chamber. Luck-

ily," added he, opening the door of a room which communicated with the vestibule:

"'In this seraglio reared, I know the secret ways.'"

Mdlle. de Cardoville was now introduced into an apartment hung with green embossed paper, and very simply furnished with mahogany chairs covered with yellow velvet; the floor was carefully polished, and a globe lamp, which gave at most a third of its proper light, was suspended (at a much greater height than usual) from the ceiling. Finding the appearance of this habitation singularly plain for the dwelling of a minister, Adrienne, though she had no suspicion, could not suppress a movement of surprise, and paused a moment on the threshold of the door. M. Baleinier, by whose arm she held, guessed the cause of her astonishment, and said to her with a smile:

"This place appears to you very paltry for 'his excellency,' does it not? If you knew what a thing constitutional economy is! Moreover, you will see a 'my lord' who has almost as little pretension as his furniture. But please to wait for me an instant. I will go and inform the minister you are here, and return immediately."

Gently disengaging himself from the grasp of Adrienne, who had involuntarily pressed close to him, the physician opened a small side-door, by which he instantly disappeared. Adrienne de Cardoville was left alone.

Though she could not have explained the cause of her impression, there was something awe-inspiring to the young lady in this large, cold, naked, curtainless room; and as, by degrees, she noticed certain peculiarities in the furniture, which she had not at first perceived, she was seized with an indefinable feeling of uneasiness.

Approaching the cheerless hearth, she perceived with surprise that an iron grating completely inclosed the opening of the chimney, and that the tongs and shovel were fastened with iron chains. Already astonished by this singularity, she was about mechanically to draw toward her an arm-chair placed against the wall, when she found that it remained motionless. She then discovered that the back of this piece of furniture, as well as that of all the other chairs, was fastened to the wainscoting by iron clamps. Unable to repress a smile, she exclaimed: "Have they so little confidence in the statesman in whose house I am, that they are obliged to fasten the furniture to the walls?"

Adrienne had recourse to this somewhat forced pleasantry, as a kind of effort to resist the painful feeling of apprehension that was gradually creeping over her; for the most profound and mournful silence reigned in this habitation, where nothing indicated the life, the movement, and the activity, which usually surround a great center of business. Only, from time to time, the young lady heard the violent gusts of wind from without.

More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and M. Baleinier did not return. In her impatient anxiety, Adrienne wished to call some one to inquire about the doctor and the minister. She raised her eyes to look for a bell-rope by the side of the chimney glass; she found none, but she perceived that what she had hitherto taken for a glass, thanks to the half obscurity of the room, was in reality a large sheet of shining tin. Drawing nearer to it, she accidentally touched a bronzed candlestick; and this, as well as a clock, was fixed to the marble of the chimney-picee.

In certain dispositions of mind, the most insignificant circumstances often assume terrific proportions. This immovable candlestick, this furniture fastened to the wainscot, this glass replaced by a tin

sheet, this profound silence, and the prolonged absence of M. Baleinier, had such an effect upon Adrienne, that she was struck with a vague terror. Yet such was her implicit confidence in the doctor, that she reproached herself with her own fears, persuading herself that the causes of them were after all of no real importance, and that it was unreasonable to feel uneasy at such trifles.

Still, though she thus strove to regain courage, her anxiety induced her to do what otherwise she would never have attempted. She approached the little door by which the doctor had disappeared, and applied her ear to it. She held her breath, and listened, but heard nothing.

Suddenly, a dull, heavy sound, like that of a falling body, was audible just above her head; she thought she could even distinguish a stifled moaning. Raising her eyes hastily, she saw some particles of the plaster fall from the ceiling, loosened, no doubt, by the shaking of the floor above.

No longer able to resist the feeling of terror, Adrienne ran to the door by which she had entered with the doctor, in order to call some one. To her great surprise, she found it was fastened on the outside. Yet, since her arrival, she had heard no sound of a key turning in the lock.

More and more alarmed, the young girl flew to the little door by which the physician had disappeared, and at which she had just been listening. This door also was fastened on the outside.

Still, wishing to struggle with the terror which was gaining invincibly upon her, Ardienne called to her aid all the firmness of her character, and tried to argue away her fears.

"I must have been deceived," she said; "it was only a fall that I heard. The moaning had no existence, except in my imagination. There are a thousand reasons for believing that it was not a person who fell down. But, then, these locked doors? They, perhaps, do not know that I am here, they may have thought that there was nobody in this room."

As she uttered these words, Adrienne looked round with anxiety; then she added in a firm voice: "No weakness! it is useless to try to blind myself to my real situation. On the contrary, I must look it well in the face. It is evident that I am not here at a minister's house; no end of reasons prove it beyond a doubt; M. Baleinier has therefore deceived me. But for what end? Why has he brought me hither? Where am I?"

The last two questions appeared to Adrienne both equally insoluble. It only remained clear that she was the victim of M. Baleinier's perfidy. But this certainly seemed so horrible to the young girl's truthful and generous soul that she still tried to combat the idea by the recollection of the confiding friendship which she had always shown this man. She said to herself with bitterness: "See how weakness and fear may lead one to unjust and odious suspicions! Yes; for until the last extremity, it is not justifiable to believe in so infernal a deception—and then only upon the clearest evidence. I will call some one; it is the only way of completely satisfying these doubts." Then, remembering that there was no bell, she added: "No matter; I will knock, and some one will doubtless answer." With her little, delicate hand Adrienne struck the door several times.

The dull, heavy sound which came from the door showed that it was very thick. No answer was returned to the young girl. She ran to the other door. There was the same appeal on her part, the same profound silence without — only interrupted from time to time by the howling of the wind.

"I am not more timid than other peo-

ple," said Adrienne, shuddering; "I do not know if it is the excessive cold, but I tremble in spite of myself. I endeavor to guard against all weakness; yet I think that any one in my position would find all this very strange and frightful."

At this instant, loud cries, or rather savage and dreadful howlings, burst furiously from the room just above, and soon after a sort of stamping of feet, like the noise of a violent struggle, shook the ceiling of the apartment. Struck with consternation, Adrienne uttered a loud cry of terror, became deadly pale, stood for a moment motionless with affright, and then rushed to one of the windows and abruptly threw it open.

A violent gust of wind, mixed with melted snow, beat against Adrienne's face, swept roughly into the room, and soon extinguished the flickering and smoky light of the lamp. Thus, plunged in profound darkness, with her hands clinging to the bars that were placed across the window, Mdlle. de Cardoville yielded at length to the full influence of her fears, so long restrained, and was about to call aloud for help, when an unexpected apparition rendered her for some minutes absolutely mute with terror.

Another wing of the building, opposite to that in which she was, stood at no great distance. Through the midst of the black darkness, which filled the space between, one large, lighted window was distinctly visible. Through the curtainless panes, Adrienne perceived a white figure, gaunt and ghastly, dragging after it a sort of shroud, and passing and repassing continually before the window, with an abrupt and restless motion. Her eyes fixed upon this window, shining through the darkness, Adrienne remained as if fascinated by that fatal vision; and, as the spectacle filled up the measure of her fears, she called for help with all her might, without quitting the bars of the window to which she clung. After a few seconds, while she was thus crying out, two tall women entered the room in silence, unperceived by Mdlle. de Cardoville, who was still clinging to the window.

These women, of about forty to fifty years of age, robust and masculine, were negligently and shabbily dressed, like chambermaids of the lower sort; over their clothes they wore large aprons of blue cotton, cut sloping from their necks, and reaching down to their feet. One of them, who held a lamp in her hand, had a

broad, red, shining face, a large pimpled nose, small green eyes, and tow hair, which straggled rough and shaggy from beneath her dirty white cap. The other, sallow, withered, and bony, wore a mourning-cap over a parchment visage, pitted with the small-pox, and rendered still more repulsive by thick black eyebrows, and some long gray hairs that overshadowed the upper lip. This woman carried, half unfolded in her hand, a garment of strange form, made of thick gray stuff.

They both entered silently by the little door, at the moment when Adrienne, in the excess of her terror, was grasping the bars of the window, and crying out: "Help! help!"

Pointing out the young lady to each other, one of them went to place the lamp on the chimney-piece, while the other (she who wore the mourning-cap) approached the window, and laid her great bony hand upon Mdlle. de Cardoville's shoulder.

Turning round, Adrienne uttered a new cry of terror at the sight of this grim figure. Then, the first moment of stupor over, she began to feel less afraid; hideous as was this woman, it was at least some one to speak to; she exclaimed, therefore, in an agitated voice: "Where is M. Baleinier?"

The two women looked at each other, exchanged a leer of mutual intelligence, but did not answer.

"I ask you, madame," resumed Adrienne, "where is M. Baleinier, who brought me hither? I wish to see him instantly."

"He is gone," said the big woman.

"Gone!" cried Adrienne; "gone without me! Gracious heaven! what can be the meaning of all this?" Then, after a moment's reflection, she resumed: "Please to fetch me a coach."

The two women looked at each other, and shrugged their shoulders. "I entreat you, madame," continued Adrienne, with forced calmness in her voice, "to fetch me a coach—since M. Baleinier is gone without me. I wish to leave this place."

"Come, come, madame," said the tall woman, who was called "Tomboy," without appearing to listen to what Adrienne asked, "it is time for you to go to bed."

"To go to bed!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, in alarm. "This is really enough to drive one mad." Then addressing the two women, she added: "What is this house? where am I? answer!"

"You are in a house," said Tomboy in a rough voice, "where you must not make a row from the window, as you did just now."

"And where you must not put out the lamp as you have done," added the other woman; who was called Gervaise, "or else we shall have a crow to pick with you."

Adrienne, unable to utter a word, and trembling with fear, looked in a kind of stupor from one to the other of these horrible women; her reason strove in vain to comprehend what was passing around her. Suddenly she thought she had guessed it, and exclaimed: "I see there is a mistake here. I do not understand how, but there is a mistake. You take me for some one else. Do you know who I am? My name is Adrienne de Cardoville! You see, therefore, that I am at liberty to leave this house; no one in the world has the right to detain me. I command you, then, to fetch me a coach immediately. If there are none in this quarter, let me have some one to accompany me home to the Rue de Babylone, Saint-Dizier House. I will reward such a person liberally, and you also."

"Well, have you finished?" said Tomboy. "What is the use of telling us all this rubbish?"

"Take care," resumed Adrienne, who wished to try every means; "if you detain me here by force, it will be very serious.

You do not know to what you expose yourselves."

"Will you come to bed; yes or no?" said Gervaise, in a tone of harsh impatience.

"Listen to me, madame," resumed Adrienne, precipitately; "let me out of this place, and I will give each of you two thousand francs. Is it not enough? I will give you ten—twenty—whatever you ask. I am rich—only let me out—for Heaven's sake, let me out! I cannot remain here—I am afraid." As she said this, the tone of the poor girl's voice was heartrending.

"Twenty thousand francs!—that's the usual figure, ain't it, Tommy?"

"Let be, Gervaise! they all sing the same song."

"Well, then, since reason, prayers, and menaces are all in vain," said Adrienne, gathering energy from her desperate position, "I declare to you that I will go out, and that instantly. We will see if you are bold enough to employ force against me."

So saying, Adrienne advanced resolutely toward the door. But at this moment the wild, hoarse cries which had preceded the noise of the struggle that had so frightened her, again resounded; only, this time, they

were not accompanied by the movement of the feet.

"Oh! what screams!" said Adrienne, stopping short, and in her terror drawing nigh to the two women. "Do you not hear those cries? What, then, is this house, in which one hears such things? And over there, too," added she, almost beside herself, as she pointed to the other wing, where the lighted window shone through the darkness and the white figure continued to pass and repass before it; "over there! do you see? What is it?"

"Oh! that 'un," said Tomboy; "one of the folks who, like you, have not behaved well."

"What do you say?" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, clasping her hands in terror. "Heavens! what is this house? What do they do to them?"

"What will be done to you, if you are naughty, and refuse to come to bed," answered Gervaise.

"They put this on them," said Tomboy, showing the garment that she had held under her arm, "they clap 'em into the strait-waistcoat."

"Oh!" cried Adrienne, hiding her face in her hands with horror. A terrible discovery had flashed suddenly upon her. She understood it all.

Capping the violent emotions of the day, the effect of this last blow was dreadful. The young girl felt her strength give way. Her hands fell powerless, her face became fearfully pale, all her limbs trembled, and, sinking upon her knees, and casting a terrified glance at the strait-waistcoat, she was just able to falter in a feeble voice, "Oh, no—not that—for pity's sake, madame. I will do—whatever you wish." And, her strength quite failing, she would have fallen upon the ground if the two women had not run toward her, and received her fainting into their arms.

"A fainting fit," said Tomboy; "that's not dangerous. Let us carry her to bed. We can undress her, and this will be all nothing."

"Carry her, then," said Gervaise. "I will take the lamp."

The tall and robust Tomboy took up Mdlle. de Cardoville as if she had been a sleeping child, carried her in her arms, and followed her companion into the chamber through which M. Baleinier had made his exit.

The chamber, though perfectly clean, was cold and bare. A greenish paper covered the walls, and a low, little iron bedstead, the head of which formed a kind of

shelf, stood in one corner; a stove, fixed in the chimney-place, was surrounded by an iron grating, which forbade a near approach; a table fastened to the wall, a chair placed before this table and also clamped to the floor, a mahogany chest of drawers, and a rush-bottomed armchair completed the scanty furniture. The curtainless window was furnished on the inside with an iron grating, which served to protect the panes from being broken.

It was into this gloomy retreat, which formed so painful a contrast with the charming little summer-house in the Rue de Babylone, that Adrienne was carried by Tomboy, who, with the assistance of Gervaise, placed the inanimate form on the bed. The lamp was deposited on the shelf at the head of the couch. While one of the nurses held her up, the other unfastened and took off the cloth dress of the young girl, whose head drooped languidly on her bosom. Though in a swoon, large tears trickled slowly from her closed eyes, whose long black lashes threw their shadows on the transparent whiteness of her cheeks. Over her neck and breast of ivory flowed the golden waves of her magnificent hair, which had come down at the time of her fall. When, as they unlaced

her satin corset, less soft, less fresh, less white than the virgin form beneath, which lay like a statue of alabaster in its covering of lace and lawn, one of the horrible hags felt the arms and shoulders of the young girl with her large, red, horny, and chapped hands. Though she did not completely recover the use of her senses, she started involuntarily from the rude and brutal touch.

"Hasn't she little feet?" said the nurse, who, kneeling down, was employed in drawing off Adrienne's stockings. "I could hold them both in the hollow of my hand." In fact, a small, rosy foot, smooth as a child's, here and there veined with azure, was soon exposed to view, as was also a leg with pink knee and ankle, of as pure and exquisite a form as that of Diana Huntress.

"And what hair!" said Tomboy; "so long and soft! She might almost walk upon it. 'Twould be a pity to cut it off, to put ice upon her skull!" As she spoke, she gathered up Adrienne's magnificent hair, and twisted it as well as she could behind her head. Alas! it was no longer the fair, light hand of Georgette, Florine, or Hebe that arranged the beauteous locks of their mistress with so much love and pride!

And as she again felt the rude touch of the nurse's hand, the young girl was once more seized with the same nervous trembling, only more frequently and strongly than before. And soon, whether by a sort of instinctive repulsion, magnetically excited during her swoon, or from the effect of the cold night air, Adrienne again started and slowly came to herself.

It is impossible to describe her alarm, horror, and chaste indignation as, thrusting aside with both her hands the numerous curls that covered her face, bathed in tears, she saw herself half-naked between these filthy hags. At first, she uttered a cry of shame and terror; then, to escape from the looks of the women, by a movement, rapid as thought, she threw down the lamp placed on the shelf at the head of her bed, so that it was extinguished and broken to pieces on the floor. After which, in the midst of the darkness, the unfortunate girl, covering herself with the bedclothes, burst into passionate sobs.

The nurses attributed Adrienne's cry and violent action to a fit of furious madness. "Oh! you begin again to break the lamps —that's your partickler fancy, is it?" cried Tomboy, angrily, as she felt her way in the dark. "Well! I give you fair warn-

ing. You shall have the strait-waistcoat on this very night, like the mad gal upstairs."

"That's it," said the other; "hold her fast, Tommy, while I go and fetch a light. Between us we'll soon master her."

"Make haste, for, in spite of her soft look, she must be a regular fury. We shall have to sit up all night with her, I suppose."

. . . . . .

Sad and painful contrast! That morning, Adrienne had risen free, smiling, happy, in the midst of all the wonders of luxury and art, and surrounded by the delicate attentions of the three charming girls whom she had chosen to serve her. In her generous and fantastic mood she had prepared a magnificent and fairy-like surprise for the young Indian prince, her relation; she had also taken a noble resolution with regard to the two orphans brought home by Dagobert; in her interview with Mme. de Saint-Dizier she had shown herself by turns proud and sensitive, melancholy and gay, ironical and serious, loyal and courageous; finally, she had come to this accursed house to plead in favor of an honest and laborious artisan.

And now, in the evening — delivered

over by an atrocious piece of treachery to the ignoble hands of two coarse-minded nurses in a madhouse—Mdlle. de Cardoville felt her delicate limbs imprisoned in that abominable garment which is called a strait-waistcoat.

Mdlle. de Cardoville passed a horrible night in company with the two hags. The next morning, at nine o'clock, what was the young lady's stupor to see Dr. Baleinier enter the room, still smiling with an air at once benevolent and paternal.

"Well, my dear child!" said he, in a bland, affectionate voice, "how have we spent the night?"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE VISIT.

THE keepers, yielding to Mdlle. de Cardoville's prayers, and, above all, to her promises of good behavior, had only left on the canvas jacket a portion of the time. Toward morning, they had allowed her to rise and dress herself, without interfering.

Adrienne was seated on the edge of her bed. The alteration in her features, her dreadful paleness, the lurid fire of fever shining in her eyes, the convulsive tremb-

ling which ever and anon shook her frame, showed already the fatal effects of this terrible night upon a susceptible and high-strung organization. At sight of Dr. Baleinier, who, with a sign, made Gervaise and her mate leave the room, Adrienne remained petrified.

She felt a kind of giddiness at the thought of the audacity of the man who dared to present himself to her! But when the physician repeated, in the softest tone of affectionate interest: "Well, my poor child! how have we spent the night?" she pressed her hands to her burning forehead, as if in doubt whether she was awake or sleeping. Then, staring at the doctor, she half opened her lips; but they trembled so much that it was impossible for her to utter a word. Anger, indignation, contempt, and, above all, the bitter and acutely painful feeling of a generous heart, whose confidence has been basely betrayed, so overpowered Adrienne that she was unable to break the silence.

"Come, come! I see how it is," said the doctor, shaking his head sorrowfully; "you are very much displeased with me—is it not so? Well! I expected it, my dear child."

These words, pronounced with the most

hypocritical effrontery, made Adrienne start up. Her pale cheek flushed, her large eyes sparkled, she lifted proudly her beautiful head, while her upper lip curled slightly with a smile of disdainful bitterness; then, passing in angry silence before M. Baleinier, who . tained his seat, she directed her swift and firm steps toward the door. This door, in which was a little wicket, was fastened on the outside. Adrienne turned toward the doctor and said to him, with an imperious gesture: "Open that door for me!"

"Come, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said the physician, "be calm. Let us talk like good friends—for you know I am your friend." And he inhaled slowly a pinch of snuff.

"It appears, sir," said Adrienne, in a voice trembling with indignation, "I am not to leave this place to-day?"

"Alas! no. In such a state of excitement—if you knew how inflamed your face is, and your eyes so feverish, your pulse must be at least eighty to the minute—I conjure you, my dear child, not to aggravate your symptoms by this fatal agitation."

After looking fixedly at the doctor, Adrienne returned with a slow step and again

took her seat on the edge of the bed. "That is right," resumed M. Baleinier; "only be reasonable; and, as I said before, let us talk together like good friends."

"You say well, sir," replied Adrienne, in a collected and perfectly calm voice; "let us talk like friends. You wish to make me pass for mad—is it not so?"

"I wish, my dear child, that one day you may feel toward me as much gratitude as you now do aversion. The latter I had fully foreseen—but, however painful may be the performance of certain duties, we must resign ourselves to it."

M. Baleinier sighed, as he said this, with such a natural air of conviction that for a moment Adrienne could not repress a movement of surprise; then, while her lip curled with a bitter laugh, she answered: "Oh, it's very clear, you have done all this for my good?"

"Really, my dear young lady—have I ever had any other design than to be useful to you?"

"I do not know, sir, if your impudence be not still more odious than your cowardly treachery!"

"Treachery!" said M. Baleinier, shrugging his shoulders with a grieved air;

"treachery, indeed! Only reflect, my poor child—do you think, if I were not acting with good faith, conscientiously, in your interest, I should return this morning to meet your indignation, for which I was fully prepared? I am the head physician of this asylum, which belongs to me—but I have two of my pupils here, doctors, like myself—and might have left them to take care of you—but, no—I could not consent to it—I knew your character, your nature, your previous history, and (leaving out of the question the interest I feel for you) I can treat your case better than any one."

Adrienne had heard M. Baleinier without interrupting him; she now looked at him fixedly, and said: "Pray, sir, how much do they pay you to make me pass for mad?"

"Madame!" cried M. Baleinier, who felt stung in spite of himself.

"You know I am rich," continued Adrienne, with overwhelming disdain; "I will double the sum that they give you. Come, sir—in the name of friendship, as you call it—let me have the pleasure of outbidding them."

"Your keepers," said M. Baleinier, recovering all his coolness, "have informed

me, in their report of the night's proceedings, that you made similar propositions to them."

"Pardon me, sir; I offered them what might be acceptable to poor women, without education, whom misfortune has forced to undertake a painful employment—but to you, sir—a man of the world, a man of science, a man of great abilities—that is quite different—the pay must be a great deal higher. There is treachery at all prices; so do not found your refusal on the smallness of my offer to those wretched women. Tell me—how much do you want?"

"Your keepers, in their report of the night, have also spoken of threats," resumed M. Baleinier, with the same coolness; "have you any of those likewise to address to me? Believe me, my poor child, you will do well to exhaust at once your attempts at corruption, and your vain threats of vengeance. We shall then come to the true state of the case."

"So you deem my threats vain," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, at length giving way to the full tide of her indignation, till then restrained. "Do you think, sir, that when I leave this place—for this outrage must have an end—that I will not proclaim

aloud your infamous treachery? Do you think that I will not denounce to the contempt and horror of all, your base conspiracy with Madame de Saint-Dizier? Oh, do you think that I will conceal the frightful treatment I have received! But, mad as I may be, I know that there are laws in this country, by which I will demand a full reparation for myself, and shame, disgrace, and punishment, for you, and for those who have employed you! Henceforth, between you and me will be hate and war to the death; and all my strength, all my intelligence—"

"Permit me to interrupt you, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said the doctor, still perfectly calm and affectionate; "nothing can be more unfavorable to your cure than to cherish idle hopes: they will only tend to keep up a state of deplorable excitement: it is best to put the facts fairly before you, that you may understand clearly your position. 1. It is impossible for you to leave this house. 2. You can have no communication with any one beyond its walls. 3. No one enters here that I cannot perfectly depend upon. 4. I am completely indifferent to your threats of vengeance, because law and reason are both in my favor."

"What! have you the right to shut me up here?"

"We should never have come to that determination, without a number of reasons of the most serious kind."

"Oh! there are reasons for it, it seems."

"Unfortunately, too many."

"You will perhaps inform me of them?"

"Alas! they are only too conclusive; and if you should ever apply to the protection of the laws, as you threatened me just now, we should be obliged to state them. The fantastical eccentricity of your manner of living, your whimsical mode of dressing up your maids, your extravagant expenditure, the story of the Indian prince, to whom you offered a royal hospitality, your unprecedented resolution of going to live by yourself, like a young bachelor, the adventure of the man found concealed in your bed-chamber; finally, the report of yesterday's conversation, which was faithfully taken down in shorthand by a person employed for that purpose."

"Yesterday?" cried Adrienne, with as much indignation as surprise.

"Oh, yes! to be prepared for every event, in case you should misinterpret the interest we take in you, we had all your answers reported by a man who was con-

cealed behind a curtain in the next room; and really, one day, in a calmer state of mind, when you come to read over quietly the particulars of what took place, you will no longer be astonished at the resolution we have been forced to adopt."

"Go on, sir," said Adrienne, with contempt.

"The facts I have cited being thus confirmed and acknowledged, you will understand, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne, that your friends are perfectly free from responsibility. It was their duty to endeavor to cure this derangement of mind, which at present only shows itself in idle whims, but which, were it to increase, might seriously compromise the happiness of your future life. Now, in my opinion, we may hope to see a radical cure, by means of a treatment at once physical and moral; but the first condition of this attempt was to remove you from the scenes which so dangerously excited your imagination; while a calm retreat, the repose of a simple and solitary life, combined with my anxious, I may say, paternal care, will gradually bring about a complete recovery—"

"So, sir," said Adrienne, with a bitter laugh, "the love of a noble independence, generosity, the worship of the beautiful,

detestation of what is baso and odious, such are the maladies of which you wish to cure me; I fear that my case is desperate, for my aunt has long ago tried to effect that benevolent purpose."

"Well, we may perhaps not succeed; but at least we will attempt it. You see, then, there is a mass of serious facts, quite enough to justify the determination come to by the family council, which puts me completely at my ease with regard to your menaces. It is to that I wish to return: a man of my age and condition never acts lightly in such circumstances, and you can readily understand what I was saying to you just now. In a word, do not hope to leave this place before your complete recovery, and rest assured that I am and shall ever be safe from your resentment. This being once admitted, let us talk of your actual state with all the interest that you naturally inspire."

"I think, sir, that, considering I am mad, you speak to me very reasonably."

"Mad! no, thank Heaven, my poor child, you are not mad yet—and I hope that, by my care, you will never be so. It is to prevent your becoming mad that one must take it in time; and, believe me, it is full time. You look at me with such an air of

surprise—now tell me, what interest can I have in talking to you thus? Is it the hatred of your aunt that I wish to favor? To what end, I would ask? What can she do for me or against me? I think of her at this moment neither more nor less than I thought yesterday. Is it a new language that I hold to yourself? Did I not speak to you yesterday, many times, of the dangerous excitement of mind in which you were, and of your singular whims and fancies? It is true, I made use of a stratagem to bring you hither. No doubt, I did so. I hastened to avail myself of the opportunity which you yourself offered, my poor, dear child; for you would never have come hither with your own good will. One day or the other, we must have found some pretext to get you here; and I said to myself; 'Her interest before all! Do your duty, let whatever will betide!' "

While M. Baleinier was speaking, Adrienne's countenance, which had hitherto expressed alternately indignation and disdain, assumed an indefinable look of anguish and horror. On hearing this man talk in such a natural manner, and with such an appearance of sincerity, justice, and reason, she felt herself more alarmed

than ever. An atrocious deception, clothed in such forms, frightened her a hundred times more than the avowed hatred of Madame de Saint-Dizier. This audacious hypocrisy seemed to her so monstrous that she almost believed it impossible.

Adrienne had so little the art of hiding her emotions, that the doctor, a skillful and profound physiognomist, instantly perceived the impression he had produced. "Come," said he to himself, "that is a great step. Fright has succeeded to disdain and anger. Doubt will come next. I shall not leave this place till she has said to me: Return soon, my good M. Baleinier!" With a voice of sorrowful emotion, which seemed to come from the very depths of his heart, the doctor thus continued: "I see you are still suspicious of me. All I can say to you is falsehood, fraud, hypocrisy, hate—is it not so? *Hate* you? why, in Heaven's name, should I hate you? What have you done to me? or rather—you will perhaps attach more value to this reason from a man of my sort," added M. Baleinier, bitterly, "or, rather, what interest have I to hate you? You, that have only been reduced to the state in which you are by an overabundance of the most generous instincts—you, that are suffering, as

it were, from an excess of good qualities—you can bring yourself coolly and deliberately to accuse an honest man, who has never given you any but marks of affection, of the basest, the blackest, the most abominable crime of which a human being could be guilty. Yes, I call it a crime; because the atrocious deception of which you accuse me would not deserve any other name. Really, my poor child, it is hard—very hard—and I now see that an independent spirit may sometimes exhibit as much injustice and intolerance as the most narrow mind. It does not incense me—no—it only pains me; yes, I assure you—it pains me cruelly." And the doctor drew his hand across his moist eyes.

It is impossible to give the accent, the look, the gesture of M. Baleinier, as he thus expressed himself. The most able and practiced lawyer, or the greatest actor in the world, could not have played this scene with more effect than the doctor—or rather, no one could have played it so well—for M. Baleinier, carried away by the influence of the situation, was himself half convinced of what he said.

In few words, he felt all the horror of his own perfidy; but he felt also that Adrienne could not believe it; for there are

combinations of such nefarious character, that pure and upright minds are unable to comprehend them as possible. If a lofty spirit looks down into the abyss of evil, beyond a certain depth, it is seized with giddiness, and no longer able to distinguish one object from the other.

And then the most perverse of men have a day, an hour, a moment, in which the good instincts, planted in the heart of every creature, appear in spite of themselves. Adrienne was too interesting, was in too cruel a position, for the doctor not to feel some pity for her in his heart; the tone of sympathy, which for some time past he had been obliged to assume toward her, and the sweet confidence of the young girl in return, had become for this man habitual and necessary gratifications. But sympathy and habit were now to yield to implacable necessity.

Thus the Marquis d'Aigrigny had idolized his mother; dying, she called him to her—and he turned away from the last prayer of a parent in the agony of death. After such an example, how could M. Baleinier hesitate to sacrifice Adrienne? The members of the Order, of which he formed a part, were bound to him—but he was perhaps still more strongly bound

to them, for a long partnership in evil creates terrible and indissoluble ties.

The moment M. Baleinier finished his fervid address to Mdlle. de Cardoville, the slide of the wicket in the door was softly pushed back, and a pair of eyes peered attentively into the chamber, unperceived by the doctor.

Adrienne could not withdraw her gaze from the physician's, which seemed to fascinate her. Mute, overpowered, seized with a vague terror, unable to penetrate the dark depths of this man's soul, moved in spite of herself by the accent of sorrow, half feigned and half real—the young lady had a momentary feeling of doubt. For the first time, it came into her mind that M. Baleinier might perhaps be committing a frightful error—committing it in good faith.

Besides, the anguish of the past night, the dangers of her position, her feverish agitation, all concurred to fill her mind with trouble and indecision. She looked at the physician with ever increasing surprise, and making a violent effort not to yield to a weakness of which she partly foresaw the dreadful consequences, she exclaimed: "No, no, sir; I will not, I cannot believe it. You have too much

skill, too much experience, to commit such an error."

"An error!" said M. Baleinier, in a grave and sorrowful tone. "Let me speak to you in the name of that skill and experience which you are pleased to ascribe to me. Hear me but for a moment, my dear child; and then I will appeal to yourself."

"To me!" replied the young girl, in a kind of stupor; "you wish to persuade me that—" Then, interrupting herself, she added, with a convulsive laugh: "This only is wanting to your triumph—to bring me to confess that I am mad—that my proper place is here—that I owe you—"

"Gratitude. Yes, you do owe it me, even as I told you at the commencement of this conversation. Listen to me then: my words may be cruel, but there are wounds which can only be cured with steel and fire. I conjure you, my dear child—reflect—throw back one impartial glance at your past life—weigh your own thoughts—and you will be afraid of yourself. Remember those moments of strange excitement, during which, as you have told me, you seemed to soar above the earth—and, above all, while it is yet time—while you preserve enough clearness of mind to compare and judge—compare, I entreat, your

manner of living with that of other ladies of your age? Is there a single one who acts as you act? who thinks as you think? unless, indeed, you imagine yourself so superior to other women, that, in virtue of that supremacy, you can justify a life and habits that have no parallel in the world."

"I have never had such stupid pride, you know it well," said Adrienne, looking at the doctor with growing terror.

"Then, my dear child, to what are we to attribute your strange and inexplicable mode of life? Can you even persuade yourself that it is founded on reason? Oh, my child! take care. As yet, you only indulge in charming originalities of conduct, poetical eccentricities, sweet and vague reveries—but the tendency is fatal, the downward course irresistible. Take care, take care! The healthful, graceful, spiritual portion of your intelligence has yet the upper hand, and imprints its stamp upon all your extravagances; but you do not know, believe me, with what frightful force the insane portion of the mind, at a given moment, develops itself and strangles up the rest. Then we have no longer graceful eccentricities like yours; but ridiculous, sordid, hideous delusions."

"Oh, you frighten me," said the unfortunate girl, as she passed her trembling hands across her burning brow.

"Then," continued M. Baleinier, in an agitated voice, "then the last rays of intelligence are extinguished; then madness —for we must pronounce the dreaded word —gets the upper hand, and displays itself in furious and savage transports."

"Like the woman upstairs," murmured Adrienne, as, with fixed and eager look, she raised her finger toward the ceiling.

"Sometimes," continued the doctor, alarmed himself at the terrible consequences of his own words, but yielding to the inexorable fatality of his situation, "sometimes madness takes a stupid and brutal form; the unfortunate creature, who is attacked by it, preserves nothing human but the shape—has only the instincts of the lower animals—eats with voracity, and moves ever backward and forward in the cell in which such a being is obliged to be confined. This is all its life—all."

"Like the woman yonder," cried Adrienne, with a still wilder look, as she slowly raised her arm toward the window that was visible on the other side of the building.

"Why—yes," said M. Baleinier. "Like

you, unhappy child, those women were young, fair, and sensible; but like you, alas! they had in them the fatal germ of insanity, which, not having been destroyed in time, grew and grew, larger and ever larger, until it overspread and destroyed their reason."

"Oh, mercy!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose head was getting confused with terror; "mercy! do not tell me such things! I am afraid. Take me from this place—oh! take me from this place!" she added, with a heartrending accent: "for, if I remain here, I shall end by going mad! No," added she, struggling with the terrible agony which assailed her, "no, do not hope it! I shall not become mad. I have all my reason. I am not blind enough to believe what you tell me. Doubtless, I live differently from others; think differently from others; am shocked by things that do not offend others; but what does all this prove? Only that I am different from others. Have I a bad heart? Am I envious or selfish? My ideas are singu lar, I know—yes, I confess it—but then, M. Baleinier, is not their tendency good, generous, noble! Oh!" cried Adrienne's supplicating voice, while her tears flowed abundantly, "I have never in my life done

one malicious action; my worst errors have arisen from excess of generosity. Is it madness to wish to see everybody about one too happy? And again, if you are mad, you must feel it yourself—and I do not feel it—and yet—I scarcely know—you tell me such terrible things of those two women! You ought to know these things better than I. But then," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, with an accent of the deepest despair, "something ought to have been done. Why, if you felt an interest for me, did you wait so long? Why did you not take pity on me sooner? But the most frightful fact is, that I do not know whether I ought to believe you—for all this may be a snare—but no, no! you weep—it is true, then!—you weep!" She looked anxiously at M. Baleinier, who, notwithstanding his cynical philosophy, could not restrain his tears at the sight of these nameless tortures.

"You weep over me," she continued; "so it is true! But (good Heaven!) must there not be something done? I will do all that you wish—all—so that I may not be like those women. But if it should be too late! no, it is not too late—say it is not too late, my good M. Baleinier! Oh, now I ask your pardon for what I said when

you came in—but then I did not know, you see—I did not know!"

To these few broken words, interrupted by sobs, and rushing forth in a sort of feverish excitement, succeeded a silence of some minutes, during which the deeply affected physician dried his tears. His resolution had almost failed him. Adrienne hid her face in her hands. Suddenly she again lifted her head; her countenance was calmer than before, though agitated by a nervous trembling.

"M. Baleinier," she resumed, with touching dignity, "I hardly know what I said to you just now. Terror, I think, made me wander; I have again collected myself. Hear me! I know that I am in your power; I know that nothing can deliver me from it. Are you an implacable enemy? or are you a friend! I am not able to determine. Do you really apprehend, as you assure me, that what is now eccentricity will hereafter become madness —or are you rather the accomplice in some infernal machination? You alone can answer. In spite of my boasted courage, I confess myself conquered. Whatever is required of me—you understand, whatever it may be, I will subscribe to, I give you my word, and you know that I hold it

sacred—you have therefore no longer any interest to keep me here. If, on the contrary, you really think my reason in danger—and I own that you have awakened in my mind vague, but frightful doubts—tell it me, and I will believe you. I am alone, at your mercy, without friends, without counsel. I trust myself blindly to you. I know not whether I address myself to a deliverer or a destroyer—but I say to you—here is my happiness—here is my life—take it—I have no strength to dispute it with you!"

These touching words, full of mournful resignation and almost hopeless reliance, gave the finishing stroke to the indecision of M. Baleinier. Already deeply moved by this scene, and without reflecting on the consequences of what he was about to do, he determined at all events to dissipate the terrible and unjust fears with which he had inspired Adrienne. Sentiments of remorse and pity, which now animated the physician, were visible in his countenance.

Alas! they were too visible. The moment he approached to take the hand of Mdlle. de Cardoville, a low but sharp voice exclaimed from behind the wicket: "M. Baleinier!"

"Rodin!" muttered the startled doctor to himself; "he's been spying me!"

"Who calls you?" asked the lady of the physician.

"A person that I promised to meet here this morning," replied he, with the utmost depression, "to go with him to St. Mary's Convent, which is close at hand."

"And what answer have you to give me?" said Adrienne, with mortal anguish.

After a moment's solemn silence, during which he turned his face toward the wicket, the doctor replied, in a voice of deep emotion: "I am—what I have always been—a friend incapable of deceiving you."

Adrienne became deadly pale. Then, extending her hand to M. Baleinier, she said to him in a voice that she endeavored to render calm: "Thank you—I will have courage—but will it be very long?"

"Perhaps a month. Solitude, reflection, a proper regimen, my attentive care, may do much. You will be allowed everything that is compatible with your situation. Every attention will be paid you. If this room displeases you I will see you have another."

"No—this or another—it is of little consequence," answered Adrienne, with an air of the deepest dejection.

"Come, come! be of good courage. There is no reason to despair."

"Perhaps you flatter me," said Adrienne, with the shadow of a smile. "Return soon," she added, "my dear M. Baleinier! my only hope rests in you now."

Her head fell upon her bosom, her hands upon her knees, and she remained sitting on the edge of the bed, pale, motionless, overwhelmed with woe.

"Mad!" she said, when M. Baleinier had disappeared. "Perhaps mad!"

. . . . . .

We have enlarged upon this episode, much less romantic than it may appear. Many times have motives of interest or vengeance, or perfidious machination, led to the abuse of the imprudent facility with which inmates are received in certain private lunatic asylums, from the hands of their families or friends.

We shall subsequently explain our views as to the establishment of a system of inspection, by the crown or the civil magistrates, for the periodical survey of these institutions, and others of no less importance, at present placed beyond the reach of all superintendence. These latter are the nunneries, of which we will presently have an example.

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CHAPTER XLVI.

PRESENTIMENTS.

WHILE the preceding events took place in Dr. Baleinier's asylum, other scenes were passing about the same hour, at Frances Baudoin's, in the Rue Brise-Miche.

Seven o'clock in the morning had just struck at St. Mery Church; the day was dark and gloomy, and the sleet rattled against the windows of the joyless chamber of Dagobert's wife.

As yet ignorant of her son's arrest, Frances had waited for him the whole of the preceding evening, and a good part of the night, with the most anxious uneasiness; yielding at length to fatigue and sleep, about three o'clock in the morning she had thrown herself on a mattress beside the bed of Rose and Blanche. But she rose with the first dawn of day, to ascend to Agricola's garret, in the very faint hope that he might have returned home some hours before.

Rose and Blanche had just risen, and dressed themselves. They were alone in the sad, chilly apartment. Spoilsport,

whom Dagobert had left in Paris, was stretched at full length near the stove; with his long muzzle resting on his fore-paws, he kept his eyes fixed on the sisters.

Having slept but little during the night, they had perceived the agitation and anguish of Dagobert's wife. They had seen her walk up and down, now talking to herself, now listening to the least noise that came up the staircase, and now kneeling before the crucifix placed at one extremity of the room. The orphans were not aware that, while she prayed with fervor on behalf of her son, this excellent woman was praying for them also. For the state of their souls filled her with anxiety and alarm.

The day before, when Dagobert had set out for Chartres, Frances, having assisted Rose and Blanche to rise, had invited them to say their morning prayer: they answered with the utmost simplicity that they did not know any, and that they never more than addressed their mother, who was in heaven. When Frances, struck with painful surprise, spoke to them of catechism, confirmation, communion, the sisters opened widely their large eyes with astonishment, understanding nothing of such talk.

According to her simple faith, terrified at the ignorance of the young girls in matters of religion, Dagobert's wife believed their souls to be in the greatest peril, the more so as, having asked them if they had ever been baptized (at the same time explaining to them the nature of that sacrament), the orphans answered they did not think they had, since there was neither church nor priest in the village where they were born, during their mother's exile in Siberia.

Placing one's self in the position of Frances, you may understand how much she was grieved and alarmed; for, in her eyes, these young girls, whom she already loved tenderly, so charmed was she with their sweet disposition, were nothing but poor heathens, innocently doomed to eternal damnation. So, unable to restrain her tears, or conceal her horrors, she had clasped them in her arms, promising immediately to attend to their salvation, and regretting that Dagobert had not thought of having them baptized by the way. Now, it must be confessed that this notion had never once occurred to the ex-grenadier.

When she went to her usual Sunday devotions, Frances had not dared to take

Rose and Blanche with her, as their complete ignorance of sacred things would have rendered their presence at church, if not useless, scandalous; but, in her own fervent prayers she implored celestial mercy for these orphans, who did not themselves know the desperate position of their souls.

Rose and Blanche were now left alone, in the absence of Dagobert's wife. They were still dressed in mourning, their charming faces seeming even more pensive than usual. Though they were accustomed to a life of misfortune, they had been struck, since their arrival in the Rue Brise-Miche, with the painful contrast between the poor dwelling which they had come to inhabit and the wonders which their young imagination had conceived of Paris, that golden city of their dreams. But soon this natural astonishment was replaced by thoughts of singular gravity for their age. The contemplation of such honest and laborious poverty made the orphans have reflections no longer those of children, but of young women. Assisted by their admirable spirit of justice, and of sympathy for all that is good, by their noble heart, by a character at once delicate and courageous, they had observed and

meditated much during the last twenty-four hours.

"Sister," said Rose to Blanche, when Frances had quitted the room, "Dagobert's poor wife is very uneasy. Did you remark in the night—how agitated she was? how she wept and prayed?"

"I was grieved to see it, sister, and wondered what could be the cause."

"I am almost afraid to guess. Perhaps we may be the cause of her uneasiness?"

"Why so, sister? Because we cannot say prayers, nor tell if we have ever been baptized?"

"That seemed to give her a good deal of pain, it is true; I was quite touched by it, for it proves that she loves us tenderly. But I could not understand how we ran such terrible danger as she said we did."

"Nor I either, sister. We have always tried not to displease our mother, who sees and hears us."

"We love those who love us; we hate nobody; we are resigned to whatever may happen to us. So, who can reproach us with any harm?"

"No one. But, perhaps, we may do some without meaning it."

"We?"

"Yes, and therefore I thought: We may perhaps be the cause of her uneasiness."

"How so?"

"Listen, sister! yesterday Madame Baudoin tried to work at those sacks of coarse cloth there on the table."

"Yes; but in about half-an-hour she told us sorrowfully that she could not go on, because her eyes failed her, and she could not see clearly."

"So that she is not able to earn her living."

"No—but her son, M. Agricola, works for her. He looks so good, so gay, so frank, and so happy to devote himself for his mother. Oh, indeed! he is the worthy brother of our angel Gabriel!"

"You will see my reason for speaking of this. Our good old Dagobert told us that, when we arrived here, he had only a few pieces of money left."

"That is true."

"Now both he and his wife are unable to earn their living: what can a poor soldier like him do?"

"You are right; he only knows how to love us, and take care of us, like his children."

"It must then be M. Agricola who will have to support his father; for Gabriel is a poor priest, who possesses nothing, and can render no assistance to those who have

brought him up. So M. Agricola will have to support the whole family by himself."

"Doubtless—he owes it to his father and mother—it is his duty, and he will do it with a good will."

"Yes, sister—but he owes us nothing."

"What do you say, Blanche?"

"He is obliged to work for us also, as we possess nothing in the world."

"I had not thought of that. True."

"It is all very well, sister, for our father to be Duke and Marshal of France, as Dagobert tells us, it is all very well for us to hope great things from this medal, but as long as father is not here, and our hopes are not realized, we shall be merely poor orphans, obliged to remain a burden to this honest family, to whom we already owe so much, and who find it so hard to live, that—"

"Why do you pause, sister?"

"What I am about to say would make other people laugh; but you will understand it. Yesterday, when Dagobert's wife saw poor Spoilsport at his dinner, she said, sorrowfully: "Alas! he eats as much as a man!'—so that I could almost have cried to hear her. They must be very poor, and yet we have come to increase their poverty."

The sisters looked sadly at each other, while Spoilsport pretended not to know they were talking of his voracity.

"Sister, I understand," said Rose, after a moment's silence. "Well, we must not be at the charge of any one. We are young, and have courage. Till our fate is decided, let us fancy ourselves daughters of workmen. After all, is not our grandfather a workman? Let us find some employment, and earn our living. It must be so proud and happy to earn one's living!"

"Good little sister," said Blanche, kissing Rose. "What happiness! You have forestalled my thought; kiss me!"

"How so?"

"Your project is mine exactly. Yesterday, when I heard Dagobert's wife complain so sadly that she had lost her sight, I looked into your large eyes, which reminded mo of my own, and said to myself: 'Well! this poor old woman may have lost her sight, but Rose and Blanche Simon can see pretty clearly'—which is a compensation," added Blanche, with a smile.

"And, after all," resumed Rose, smiling in her turn, "the young ladies in question are not so very awkward as not to be able

to sew up great sacks of coarse cloth—though it may chafe their fingers a little."

"So we had both the same thought, as usual; only I wished to surprise you, and waited till we were alone, to tell you my plan."

"Yes, but there is something teases me."

"What is that?"

"First of all, Dagobert and his wife will be sure to say to us: 'Young ladies, you are not fitted for such work. What, daughters of a Marshal of France sewing up great ugly bags!' And then, if we insist upon it, they will add: 'Well, we have no work to give you. If you want any, you must hunt for it.' What would the Misses Simon do then?"

"The fact is, that when Dagobert has made up his mind to anything—"

"Oh! even then, if we coax him well—"

"Yes, in certain things; but in others he is immovable. It is just as when upon the journey we wished to prevent his doing so much for us."

"Sister, an idea strikes me," cried Rose, "an excellent idea!"

"What is it? quick!"

"You know the young woman they call Mother Bunch, who appears to be so serviceable and persevering?"

"Oh, yes! and so timid and discreet. She seems always to be afraid of giving offense, even if she looks at one. Yesterday, she did not perceive that I saw her; but her eyes were fixed on you with so good and sweet an expression that tears came into mine at the very sight of it."

"Well, we must ask her how she gets work, for certainly she lives by her labor."

"You are right. She will tell us all about it; and when we know, Dagobert may scold us, or try to make great ladies of us, but we will be as obstinate as he is."

"That is it; we must show some spirit! We will prove to him, as he says himself, that we have soldier's blood in our veins."

"We will say to him: 'Suppose, as you say, we should one day be rich, my good Dagobert, we shall only remember this time with the more pleasure.'"

"It is agreed then, is it not, Rose? The first time we are alone with Mother Bunch we must make her our confidante, and ask her for information. She is so good a person that she will not refuse us."

"And when father comes home he will be pleased, I am sure, with our courage."

"And will approve our wish to support ourselves, as if we were alone in the world."

On these words of her sister, Rose started. A cloud of sadness, almost of alarm, passed over her charming countenance, as she exclaimed: "Oh, sister, what a horrible idea!"

"What is the matter? your look frightens me."

"At the moment I heard you say that our father would approve our wish to support ourselves, as if we were alone in the world—a frightful thought struck me—I know not why—but feel how my heart beats—just as if some misfortune were about to happen to us."

"It is true: your poor heart beats violently. But what was this thought? You alarm me."

"When we were prisoners, they did not at least separate us, and, besides, the prison was a kind of shelter—"

"A sad one, though shared with you."

"But if, when arrived here, any accident had parted us from Dagobert—if we had been left alone, without help, in this great town?"

"Oh, sister! do not speak of that. It would indeed be terrible. What would become of us, kind Heaven?"

This cruel thought made the girls remain for a moment speechless with emotion.

Their sweet faces, which had just before glowed with a noble hope, grew pale and sad. After a pretty long silence, Rose uplifted her eyes, now filled with tears, "Why does this thought," she said, trembling, "affect us so deeply, sister? My heart sinks within me, as if it were really to happen to us."

"I feel as frightened as you yourself. Alas! were we both to be lost in this immense city, what would become of us?"

"Do not let us give way to such ideas, Blanche! are we not here in Dagobert's house, in the midst of good people?"

"And yet, sister," said Rose, with a pensive air, "it is perhaps good for us to have had this thought."

"Why so?"

"Because we shall now find this poor lodging all the better, as it affords a shelter from all our fears. And when, thanks to our labor, we are no longer a burden to any one, what more can we need until the arrival of our father?"

"We shall want for nothing—there you are right—but still, why did this thought occur to us, and why does it weigh so heavily on our minds?"

"Yes, indeed—why? Are we not here

in the midst of friends that love us? How could we suppose that we should ever be left alone in Paris? It is impossible that such a misfortune should happen to us—is it not, my dear sister?"

"Impossible!" said Rose, shuddering. "If the day before we reached that village in Germany, where poor Jovial was killed, any one had said to us: 'To-morrow, you will be in prison'—we should have answered as now: 'It is impossible. Is not Dagobert here to protect us; what have we to fear?' And yet, sister, the day after we were in prison at Leipsic."

"Oh! do not speak thus, my dear sister! It frightens me."

By a sympathetic impulse, the orphans took one another by the hand, while they pressed close together, and looked around with involuntary fear. The sensation they felt was in fact deep, strange, inexplicable, and yet lowering—one of those dark presentiments which come over us, in spite of ourselves—those fatal gleams of prescience, which throw a lurid light on the mysterious profundities of the future.

Unaccountable glimpses of divination! often no sooner perceived than forgotten—but, when justified by the event, ap-

pearing with all the attributes of an awful fatality!

. . . . . .

The daughters of Marshal Simon were still absorbed in the mournful reverie which these singular thoughts had awakened, when Dagobert's wife, returning from her son's chamber, entered the room with a painfully agitated countenance.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE LETTER.

FRANCES' agitation was so perceptible that Rose could not help exclaiming: "Good gracious, what is the matter?"

"Alas, my dear young ladies! I can no longer conceal it from you," said Frances, bursting into tears. "Since yesterday, I have not seen him. I expected my son to supper as usual, and he never came; but I would not let you see how much I suffered. I continued to expect him, minute after minute; for ten years he has never gone up to bed without coming to kiss me; so I spent a good part of the night close to the door, listening if I could hear his step. But he did not come; and, at last, about three o'clock in the morning, I threw myself down upon the

mattress. I have just been to see (for I still had a faint hope) if my son had come in this morning—"

"Well, madame?"

"There is no sign of him!" said the poor mother, drying her eyes.

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with emotion; the same thought filled the minds of both; if Agricola should not return, how would this family live? would they not, in such an event, become doubly burdensome?

"But, perhaps, madame," said Blanche, "M. Agricola remained too late at his work to return home last night."

"Oh! no, no! he would have returned in the middle of the night, because he knew what uneasiness he would cause me by stopping out. Alas! some misfortune must have happened him. Perhaps he has been injured at the forge, he is so persevering at his work! Oh, my poor boy! and, as if I did not feel enough anxiety about him, I am also uneasy about my poor young woman who lives upstairs."

"Why so, madame?"

"When I left my son's room, I went into hers, to tell her my grief, for she is almost a daughter to me; but I did not find her in the little closet where she lives,

and the bed had not even been slept in. Where can she have gone so early—she, that never goes out?"

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with fresh uneasiness, for they counted much upon Mother Bunch to help them in the resolution they had taken. Fortunately, both they and Frances were soon to be satisfied on this head, for they heard two low knocks at the door, and the seamstress's voice, saying: "Can I come in, Mrs. Baudoin?"

By a spontaneous impulse, Rose and Blanche ran to the door and opened it to the young girl. Sleet and snow had been falling incessantly since the evening before; the gingham dress of the young seamstress, her scanty cotton shawl, and the black net cap, which, leaving uncovered two thick bands of chestnut hair, encircled her pale and interesting countenance, were all dripping wet; the cold had given a livid appearance to her thin, white hands; it was only in the fire of her blue eyes, generally so soft and timid, that one perceived the extraordinary energy which this frail and fear-full creature had gathered from the emergency of the occasion.

"Dear me! where do you come from, my good Mother Bunch?" said Frances.

"Just now, in going to see if my son had returned, I opened your door, and was quite astonished to find you gone out so early."

"I bring you news of Agricola."

"Of my son!" cried Frances, trembling all over. "What has happened to him? Did you see him?—Did you speak to him? —Where is he?"

"I did not see him, but I know where he is." Then, perceiving that Frances grew very pale, the girl added: "He is well; he is in no danger."

"Blessed be God, who has pity on a poor sinner!—who yesterday restored me my husband, and to-day, after a night of cruel anguish, assures me of the safety of my child!" So saying, Frances knelt down upon the floor, and crossed herself with fervor.

During the moment of silence caused by this pious action, Rose and Blanche approached Mother Bunch, and said to her in a low voice, with an expression of touching interest: "How wet you are! you must be very cold. Take care you do not get ill. We did not venture to ask Madame Frances to light the fire in the stove, but now we will do so."

Surprised and affected by the kindness

of Marshal Simon's daughters, the hunchback, who was more sensible than others to the least mark of kindness, answered them with a look of ineffable gratitude: "I am much obliged to you, young ladies; but I am accustomed to the cold, and am moreover so anxious that I do not feel it."

"And my son?" said Frances, rising after she had remained some moments on her knees; "why did he stay out all night? And could you tell me where to find him, my good girl? Will he soon come? why is he so long?"

"I assure you, Agricola is well; but I must inform you, that for some time—"

"Well?"

"You must have courage, mother."

"Oh! the blood runs cold in my veins. What has happened? why shall I not see him?"

"Alas, he is arrested!"

"Arrested!" cried Rose and Blanche, with affright.

"Father! Thy will be done!" said Frances; "but it is a great misfortune. Arrested! for what? He is so good and honest, that there must be some mistake."

"The day before yesterday," resumed Mother Bunch, "I received an anonymous letter, by which I was informed that Agri-

cola might be arrested at any moment, on account of his song. We agreed together that he should go to the rich young lady in the Rue de Babylone, who had offered him her services, and ask her to procure bail for him, to prevent his going to prison. Yesterday morning he set out to go to the young lady's."

"And neither of you told me anything of all this—why did you hide it from me?"

"That we might not make you uneasy, mother; for, counting on the generosity of that young lady, I expected Agricola back every moment. When he did not come yesterday evening, I said to myself: 'Perhaps the necessary formalities with regard to the bail have detained him.' But the time passed on, and he did not make his appearance. So, I watched all night, expecting him."

"So you did not go to bed either, my good girl?"

"No, I was too uneasy. This morning, not being able to conquer my fears, I went out before dawn. I remembered the address of the young lady in the Rue de Babylone, and I ran thither."

"Oh, well!" said Frances with anxiety; "you were in the right. According to

what my son told us, that young lady appeared very good and generous."

Mother Bunch shook her head sorrowfully: a tear glittered in her eyes, as she continued: "It was still dark when I arrived at the Rue de Babylone; I waited till daylight was come."

"Poor child! you, who are so weak and timid," said Frances, with deep feeling, "to go so far, and in this dreadful weather! Oh, you have been a real daughter to me!"

"Has not Agricola been like a brother to me?" said Mother Bunch, softly, with a slight blush.

"When it was daylight," she resumed, "I ventured to ring at the door of the little summer-house; a charming young girl, but with a sad, pale countenance, opened the door to me. 'I come in the name of an unfortunate mother in despair,' said I to her immediately, for I was so poorly dressed that I feared to be sent away as a beggar; but seeing, on the contrary, that the young girl listened to me with kindness, I asked her if, the day before, a young workman had not come to solicit a great favor of her mistress. 'Alas! yes,' answered the young girl; 'my mistress was going to interest herself for him, and, hearing that he was in danger of being

arrested, she concealed him here; unfortunately, his retreat was discovered, and yesterday afternoon, at four o'clock, he was arrested and taken to prison.'"

Though the orphans took no part in this melancholy conversation, the sorrow and anxiety depicted in their countenances showed how much they felt for the sufferings of Dagobert's wife.

"But the young lady?" cried Frances. "You should have tried to see her, my good Mother Bunch, and begged her not to abandon my son. She is so rich that she must have influence, and her protection might save us from great calamities."

"Alas!" said Mother Bunch, with bitter grief, "we must renounce this last hope."

"Why?" said Frances. "If this young lady is so good she will have pity upon us, when she knows that my son is the only support of a whole family, and that for him to go to prison is worse than for another, because it will reduce us all to the greatest misery."

"But this young lady," replied the girl, "according to what I learned from her weeping maid, was taken last evening to a lunatic asylum: it appears she is mad."

"Mad! Oh! it is horrible for her, and for us also—for now there is no hope.

What will become of us without my son? Oh, merciful Heaven!" The unfortunate woman hid her face in her hands.

A profound silence followed this heart-rending outburst. Rose and Blanche exchanged mournful glances, for they perceived that their presence augmented the weighty embarrassments of this family. Mother Bunch, worn out with fatigue, a prey to painful emotions, and trembling with cold in her wet clothes, sunk exhausted on a chair, and reflected on their desperate position.

That position was indeed a cruel one!

Often, in times of political disturbances, or of agitation among the laboring classes, caused by want of work, or by the unjust reduction of wages (the result of the powerful coalition of the capitalists)—often are whole families reduced, by a measure of preventive imprisonment, to as deplorable a position as that of Dagobert's household by Agricola's arrest—an arrest which, as will afterward appear, was entirely owing to Rodin's arts.

Now, with regard to this "precautionary imprisonment," of which the victims are almost always honest and industrious mechanics, driven to the necessity of combining together by the Inorganization of

Labor and the Insufficiency of Wages, it is painful to see the law, which ought to be equal for all, refuse to strikers what it grants to masters—because the latter can dispose of a certain sum of money. Thus, under many circumstances, the rich man, by giving bail, can escape the annoyance and inconveniences of a preventive incarceration; he deposits a sum of money, pledges his word to appear on a certain day, and goes back to his pleasures, his occupations, and the sweet delights of his family. Nothing can be better; an accused person is innocent till he is proved guilty; we cannot be too much impressed with that indulgent maxim. It is well for the rich man that he can avail himself of the mercy of the law. But how is it with the poor?

Not only has he no bail to give, for his whole capital consists of his daily labor; but it is upon him chiefly that the rigors of preventive measures must fall with a terrible and fatal force.

For the rich man, imprisonment is merely the privation of ease and comfort, tedious hours, and the pain of separation from his family—distresses not unworthy of interest, for all suffering deserves pity, and the tears of the rich man separated from his

children are as bitter as those of the poor. But the absence of the rich man does not condemn his family to hunger and cold, and the incurable maladies caused by exhaustion and misery.

For the workman, on the contrary, imprisonment means want, misery, sometimes death, to those most dear to him. Possessing nothing, he is unable to find bail, and he goes to prison. But if he have, as it often happens, an old, infirm father or mother, a sick wife, or children in the cradle? What will become of this unfortunate family? They could hardly manage to live from day to day upon the wages of this man, wages almost always insufficient, and suddenly this only resource will be wanting for three or four months together.

What will this family do? To whom will they have recourse?

What will become of these infirm old men, these sickly wives, these little children, unable to gain their daily bread? If they chance to have a little linen and a few spare clothes, these will be carried to the pawnbroker's, and thus they will exist for a week or so—but afterward?

And if winter adds the rigors of the season to this frightful and inevitable misery?

Then will the imprisoned artisan see in his mind's eye, during the long and sleepless nights, those who are dear to him wan, gaunt, haggard, exhausted, stretched almost naked upon filthy straw, or huddled close together to warm their frozen limbs. And, should he afterward be acquitted, it is ruin and desolation that he finds on his return to his poor dwelling.

And then, after that long cessation from labor, he will find it difficult to return to his old employers. How many days will be lost in seeking for work! and a day without employment is a day without bread!

Let us repeat our opinion that if, under various circumstances, the law did not afford to the rich the facility of giving bail, we could only lament over all such victims of individual and inevitable misfortune. But since the law does provide the means of setting provisionally at liberty those who possess a certain sum of money, why should it deprive of this advantage those very persons for whom liberty is indeed indispensable, as it involves the existence of themselves and families?

Is there any remedy for this deplorable state of things? We believe there is.

The law has fixed the minimum of bail

at five hundred francs. Now five hundred francs represent, upon the average, six months' labor of an industrious workman.

If he have a wife and two children (which is also about the average), it is evidently quite impossible for him to have saved any such sum.

So, to ask of such a man five hundred francs to enable him to continue to support his family is in fact to put him beyond the pale of the law, though, more than any one else, he requires its protection, because of the disastrous consequences which his imprisonment entails upon others.

Would it not be equitable and humane, a noble and salutary example, to accept, in every case where bail is allowed (and where the good character of the accused could be honorably established), moral guaranties, in the absence of material ones, from those who have no capital but their labor and their integrity—to accept the word of an honest man to appear upon the day of trial? Would it not be great and moral in these days to raise the value of the plighted word, and exalt man in his own eyes, by showing him that his promise was held to be sufficient security?

Will you so degrade the dignity of man

as to treat this proposition as an impossible and Utopian dream? We ask, how many prisoners of war have ever broken their parole, and if officers and soldiers are not brothers of the working man?

Without exaggerating the virtue of promise-keeping in the honest and laborious poor, we feel certain that an engagement taken by the accused to appear on the day of trial would be always fulfilled, not only with fidelity, but with the warmest gratitude—for his family would not have suffered by his absence, thanks to the indulgence of the law.

This is also another fact of which France may well be proud. It is, that her magistrates (although miserably paid as the army itself) are generally wise, upright, humane, and independent; they have the true feeling of their own useful and sacred mission; they know how to appreciate the wants and distresses of the working classes, with whom they are so often brought in contact; to them might be safely granted the power of fixing those cases in which a moral security, the only one that can be given by the honest and necessitous man, should be received as sufficient.

Finally, if those who make the laws have so low an opinion of the people as to

reject with disdain the suggestions we have ventured to throw out, let them at least so reduce the minimum of bail, as to render it available for those who have most need to escape the fruitless rigors of imprisonment. Let them take, as their lowest limit, the month's wages of an artisan—say *eighty francs.*

This sum would still be exorbitant; but, with the aid of friends, the pawnbrokers, and some little advances, eighty francs might perhaps be found—not always, it is true—but still sometimes—and at all events, many families would be rescued from frightful misery.

Having made these observations, let us return to Dagobert's family, who, in consequence of the preventive arrest of Agricola, were now reduced to an almost hopeless state.

. . . . . .

The anguish of Dagobert's wife increased, the more she reflected on her situation; for, including the marshal's daughters, four persons were left absolutely without resource. It must be confessed, however, that the excellent mother thought less of herself than of the grief which her son must feel in thinking over her deplorable position.

At this moment there was a knock at the door.

"Who is there?" said Frances.

"It is me—Father Loriot."

"Come in," said Dagobert's wife,

The dyer, who also performed the functions of a porter, appeared at the door of the room. This time, his arms were no longer of a bright apple-green, but of a magnificent violet.

"Mrs. Baudoin," said Father Loriot, "here is a letter that the giver of holy water at Saint Mery's has just brought from Abbe Dubois, with a request that I would bring it up to you immediately, as it is very pressing."

"A letter from my confessor?" said Frances, in astonishment; and, as she took it, added: "Thank you, Father Loriot."

"You do not want anything?"

"No, Father Loriot."

"My respects to the ladies!" and the dyer went out.

"Mother Bunch, will you read this letter for me?" said Frances, anxious to learn the contents of the missive in question.

"Yes, mother"—and the young girl read as follows:

"'My dear Madame Baudoin—I am in the habit of hearing you Tuesday and Saturday, but I shall not be at liberty either to-morrow or the last day of the week; you must then come to me this morning, unless you wish to remain a whole week without approaching the tribunal of penance.'"

"Good heavens! a week!" cried Dagobert's wife. "Alas! I am only too conscious of the necessity of going there to-day, notwithstanding the trouble and grief in which I am plunged."

Then, addressing herself to the orphans, she continued: "Heaven has heard the prayers that I made for you, my dear young ladies; this very day I shall be able to consult a good and holy man with regard to the great dangers to which you are exposed. Poor dear souls, that are so innocent, and yet so guilty, without any fault of your own! Heaven is my witness that my heart bleeds for you as much as for my son."

Rose and Blanche looked at each other in confusion; they could not understand the fears with which the state of their souls inspired the wife of Dagobert. The latter soon resumed, addressing the young

seamstress: "My good girl, will you render me yet another service?"

"Certainly."

"My husband took Agricola's week's wages with him to pay his journey to Chartres. It was all the money I had in the house; I am sure that my poor child had none about him, and in prison he will perhaps want some. Therefore take my silver cup, fork, and spoon, the two pair of sheets that remain over, and my wadded silk shawl, that Agricola gave me on my birthday, and carry them all to the pawnbroker's. I will try and find out in which prison my son is confined, and will send him half of the little sum we get upon the things; the rest will serve us till my husband comes home. And then, what shall we do? What a blow for him—and only more misery in prospect—since my son is in prison and I have lost my sight. Almighty Father!" cried the unfortunate mother, with an expression of impatient and bitter grief, "why am I thus afflicted? Have I not done enough to deserve some pity, if not for myself, at least for those belonging to me?" But immediately reproaching herself for this outburst, she added, "No, no! I ought to accept with thankfulness all that Thou sendest me.

Forgive me for these complaints, or punish only myself!"

"Be of good courage, mother!" said Mother Bunch. "Agricola is innocent, and will not remain long in prison."

"But now I think of it," resumed Dagobert's wife, "to go to the pawnbroker's will make you lose much time, my poor girl."

"I can make up that in the night, Madame Frances; I could not sleep, knowing you in such trouble. Work will amuse me."

"Yes, but the candles—"

"Never mind, I am a little beforehand with my work," said the poor girl, telling a falsehood.

"Kiss me, at least," said Frances, with moist eyes, "for you are the very best creature in the world." So saying, she hastened out of the room.

Rose and Blanche were left alone with Mother Bunch; at length had arrived the moment for which they had waited with so much impatience. Dagobert's wife proceeded to St. Mery Church, where her confessor was expecting to see her.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

NOTHING could be more gloomy than the appearance of St. Mery Church, on this dark and snowy winter's day. Frances stopped a moment beneath the porch, to behold a lugubrious spectacle.

While a priest was mumbling some words in a low voice, two or three dirty choristers, in soiled surplices, were chanting the prayers for the dead, with an absent and sullen air, round a plain deal coffin, followed only by a sobbing old man and a child, miserably clad. The beadle and the sacristan, very much displeased at being disturbed for so wretched a funeral, had not deigned to put on their liveries, but, yawning with impatience, waited for the end of the ceremony, so useless to the interests of the establishment. At length, a few drops of holy water being sprinkled on the coffin, the priest handed the brush to the beadle and retired.

Then took place one of those shameful scenes, the necessary consequence of an ignoble and sacrilegious traffic, so frequent

with regard to the burials of the poor, who cannot afford to pay for tapers, high mass, or violins—for now St. Thomas Aquinas' Church has violins even for the dead.

The old man stretched forth his hand to the sacristan to receive the brush. "Come, look sharp!" said that official, blowing on his fingers.

The emotion of the old man was profound, and his weakness extreme; he remained for a moment without stirring, while the brush was clasped tightly in his trembling hand. In that coffin was his daughter, the mother of the ragged child who wept by his side—his heart was breaking at the thought of that last farewell; he stood motionless, and his bosom heaved with convulsive sobs.

"Now, will you make haste?" said the brutal beadle. "Do you think we are going to sleep here?"

The old man quickened his movements. He made the sign of the cross over the corpse, and, stooping down, was about to place the brush in the hand of his grandson, when the sacristan, thinking the affair had lasted long enough, snatched the sprinkling-brush from the child and made a sign to the bearers to carry away the coffin—which was immediately done.

"Wasn't that old beggar a slow coach?" said the beadle to his companion, as they went back to the sacristy. "We shall hardly have time to get breakfast and to dress ourselves for the bang-up funeral of this morning. That will be something like a dead man, that's worth the trouble. I shall shoulder my halberd in style!"

"And mount your colonel's epaulets, to throw dust in the eyes of the women that let out the chairs—eh, you old rascal?" said the other, with a sly look.

"What can I do, Catillard? When one has a fine figure, it must be seen," answered the beadle, with a triumphant air. "I cannot blind the women to prevent their losing their hearts!"

Thus conversing, the two men reached the sacristy. The sight of the funeral had only increased the gloom of Frances. When she entered the church, seven or eight persons, scattered about upon chairs, alone occupied the damp and icy building. One of the distributors of holy water, an old fellow with a rubicund, joyous, wine-bibbing face, seeing Frances approach the little font, said to her in a low voice: "Abbe Dubois is not yet in his box. Be quick, and you will have the first wag of his beard."

Though shocked at this pleasantry, Frances thanked the irreverent speaker, made devoutly the sign of the cross, advanced some steps into the church, and knelt down upon the stones to repeat the prayer which she always offered up before approaching the tribunal of penance. Having said this prayer, she went toward a dark corner of the church, in which was an oaken confessional, with a black curtain drawn across the grated door. The places on each side were vacant; so Frances knelt down in that upon the right hand, and remained there for some time absorbed in bitter reflections.

In a few minutes a priest of tall stature, with gray hair and a stern countenance, clad in a long black cassock, stalked slowly along one of the aisles of the church. A short, old, misshapen man, badly dressed, leaning upon an umbrella, accompanied him, and from time to time whispered in his ear, when the priest would stop to listen with a profound and respectful deference.

As they approached the confessional, the short old man, perceiving Frances on her knees, looked at the priest with an air of interrogation. "It is she," said the clergyman.

"Well, in two or three hours they will expect the two girls at St. Mary's Convent. I count upon it," said the old man.

"I hope so, for the sake of their souls," answered the priest; and, bowing gravely, he entered the confessional. The short old man quitted the church.

This old man was Rodin. It was on leaving Saint Mery's that he went to the lunatic asylum, to assure himself that Dr. Baleinier had faithfully executed his instructions with regard to Adrienne de Cardoville.

Frances was still kneeling in the interior of the confessional. One of the slides opened, and a voice began to speak. It was that of the priest, who, for the last twenty years, had been the confessor of Dagobert's wife, and exercised over her an irresistible and all-powerful influence.

"You received my letter?" said the voice.

"Yes, father."

"Very well—I listen to you."

"Bless me, father—for I have sinned!" said Frances.

The voice pronounced the formula of the benediction. Dagobert's wife answered "amen," as was proper, said her *confiteor*. "It is my fault," gave an account

of the manner in which she had performed her last penance, and then proceeded to the enumeration of the new sins, committed since she had received absolution.

For this excellent woman, a glorious martyr of industry and maternal love, always fancied herself sinning; her conscience was incessantly tormented by the fear that she had committed some incomprehensible offense. This mild and courageous creature, who, after a whole life of devotion, ought to have passed what time remained to her in calm serenity of soul, looked upon herself as a great sinner, and lived in continual anxiety, doubting much her ultimate salvation.

"Father," said Frances, in a trembling voice, "I accuse myself of omitting my evening prayer the day before yesterday. My husband, from whom I had been separated for many years, returned home. The joy and the agitation caused by his arrival made me commit this great sin."

"What next?" said the voice, in a severe tone, which redoubled the poor woman's uneasiness.

"Father, I accuse myself of falling into the same sin yesterday evening. I was in a state of mortal anxiety, for my son did not come home as usual, and I waited for

him minute after minute, till the hour had passed over."

"What next?" said the voice.

"Father, I accuse myself of having told a falsehood all this week to my son, by letting him think that on account of his reproaching me for neglecting my health I had taken a little wine for my dinner—whereas I had left it for him, who has more need of it, because he works so much."

"Go on!" said the voice.

"Father, I accuse myself of a momentary want of resignation this morning, when I learned that my poor son was arrested; instead of submitting with respect and gratitude to this new trial which the Lord hath sent me—alas! I rebelled against it in my grief—and of this I accuse myself."

"A bad week," said the priest, in a tone of still greater severity, "a bad week—for you have always put the creature before the Creator. But proceed!"

"Alas, father!" resumed Frances, much dejected, "I know that I am a great sinner; and I fear that I am on the road to sins of a still graver kind."

"Speak!"

"My husband brought with him from

Siberia two young orphans, daughters of Marshal Simon. Yesterday morning I asked them to say their prayers, and I learned from them, with as much fright as sorrow; that they know none of the mysteries of our holy faith, though they are fifteen years old. They have never received the sacrament, nor are they even baptized, father—not even baptized!"

"They must be heathens!" cried the voice, in a tone of angry surprise.

"That is what so much grieves me, father; for, as I and my husband are in the room of parents to these young orphans, we should be guilty of the sins which they might commit—should we not, father?"

"Certainly--since you take the place of those who ought to watch over their souls. The shepherd must answer for his flock," said the voice.

"And if they should happen to be in mortal sin, father, I and my husband would be in mortal sin?"

"Yes," said the voice; "you take the place of their parents; and fathers and mothers are guilty of all the sins which their children commit when those sins arise from the want of a Christian education."

"Alas, father! what am I to do? I ad-

dress myself to you as I would to Heaven itself. Every day, every hour, that these poor girls remain heathens may contribute to bring about their eternal damnation, may it not, father?" said Frances, in a tone of the deepest emotion.

"Yes," answered the voice; "and the weight of this terrible responsibility rests upon you and your husband; you have the charge of souls!"

"Lord, have mercy upon me!" said Frances, weeping.

"You must not grieve yourself thus," answered the voice, in a softer tone; "happily for these unfortunates, they have met you upon the way. They will have in you and your husband good and pious examples—for I suppose that your husband, though formerly an ungodly person, now practices his religious duties?"

"We must pray for him, father," said Frances, sorrowfully; "grace has not yet touched his heart. He is like my poor child, who has also not been called to holiness. Ah, father!" said Frances, drying her tears, "these thoughts are my heaviest cross."

"So neither your husband nor your son practices," resumed the voice, in a tone of reflection; "this is serious—very serious.

The religious education of these two unfortunate girls has yet to begin. In your house, they will have ever before them the most deplorable examples. Take care! I have warned you. You have the charge of souls—your responsibility is immense!"

"Father, it is that which makes me wretched—I am at a loss what to do. Help me, and give me your counsels; for twenty years your voice has been to me as the voice of the Lord."

"Well! you must agree with your husband to send these unfortunate girls to some religious house where they may be instructed."

"We are too poor, father, to pay for their schooling, and unfortunately my son has just been put in prison for songs that he wrote."

"Behold the fruit of impiety," said the voice, severely; "look at Gabriel! he has followed my counsels, and is now the model of every Christian virtue."

"My son, Agricola, has good qualities, father; he is so kind, so devoted!"

"Without religion," said the voice, with redoubled severity, "what you call good qualities are only vain appearances; at the least breath of the devil they will disappear —for the devil lurks in every soul that has no religion."

"Oh! my poor son!" said Frances, weeping; "I pray for him every day, that faith may enlighten him."

"I have always told you," resumed the voice, "that you have been too weak with him. God now punishes you for it. You should have parted from this irreligious son, and not sanctioned his impiety by loving him as you do. 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off,' saith the Scripture."

"Alas, father! you know it is the only time I have disobeyed you; but I could not bring myself to part from my son."

"Therefore is your salvation uncertain—but God is merciful. Do not fall into the same fault with regard to these young girls, whom Providence has sent you that you might save them from eternal damnation. Do not plunge them into it by your own culpable indifference."

"Oh, father! I have wept and prayed for them."

"That is not sufficient. These unfortunate children cannot have any notion of good or evil. Their souls must be an abyss of scandal and impurity—brought up as they have been, by an impious mother and a soldier devoid of religion."

"As for that, father," said Frances, with simplicity, "they are gentle as

angels, and my husband, who has not quitted them since their birth, declares they have the best hearts in the world."

"Your husband has dwelt all his life in mortal sin," said the voice harshly; "how can he judge of the state of souls? I repeat to you that as you represent the parents of these unfortunates, it is not to-morrow, but it is to-day, and on the instant, that you must labor for their salvation, if you would not incur a terrible responsibility."

"It is true—I know it well, father—and I suffer as much from this fear as from grief at my son's arrest. But what is to be done? I could not instruct these young girls at home—for I have not the knowledge—I have only faith—and then my poor husband, in his blindness, makes game of sacred things, which my son, at least, respects in my presence, out of regard for me. Then, once more, father, come to my aid, I conjure you! Advise me; what is to be done?"

"We cannot abandon these two young souls to frightful perdition," said the voice, after a moment's silence: "there are not two ways of saving them: there is only one, and that is to place them in a religious house, where they may be sur-

rounded by good and pious examples."

"Oh, father! if we were not so poor, or if I could still work, I would try to gain sufficient to pay for their board, and do for them as I did for Gabriel. Unfortunately, I have quite lost my sight; but you, father, know some charitable souls, and if you could get any of them to interest themselves for these poor orphans—"

"Where is their father?"

"He was in India; but, my husband tells me, he will soon be in France. That, however, is uncertain. Besides, it would make my heart bleed to see those poor children share our misery—which will soon be extreme—for we only live by my son's labor."

"Have these girls no relation here?" asked the voice.

"I believe not, father."

"It was their mother who intrusted them to your husband, to bring them to France?"

"Yes, father; he was obliged to set out yesterday for Chartres, on some very pressing business, as he told me."

It will be remembered that Dagobert had not thought fit to inform his wife of the hopes which the daughters of Marshal Simon founded on the possession of the medal, and that he had particularly charged them not to mention these hopes, even to Frances.

"So," resumed the voice, after a pause of some moments' duration, "your husband is not in Paris?"

"No, father; but he will doubtless return this evening or to-morrow morning."

"Listen to me," said the voice, after another pause. "Every minute lost for those two young girls is a new step on the road to perdition. At any moment the hand of God may smite them, for He alone knows the hour of our death; and were they to die in the state in which they now are, they would most probably be lost to all eternity. This very day, therefore, you must open their eyes to the divine light, and place them in a religious house. It is your duty—it should be your desire!"

"Oh, yes, father! but, unfortunately, I am too poor, as I have already told you."

"I know it—you do not want for zeal or faith—but even were you capable of directing these young girls, the impious examples of your husband and son would daily destroy your work. Others must do for these orphans, in the name of Christian charity, that which you cannot do, though you are answerable for them before Heaven."

"Oh, father! if, thanks to you, this

good work could be accomplished, how grateful I should be!"

"It is not impossible. I know the superior of a convent where these young girls would be instructed as they ought. The charge for their board would be diminished in consideration of their poverty; but, however small, it must be paid, and there would be also an outfit to furnish. All that would be too dear for you."

"Alas! yes, father."

"But, by taking a little from my poor-box, and by applying to one or two generous persons, I think I shall be able to complete the necessary sum, and so get the young girls received at the convent."

"Ah, father! you are my deliverer, and these childrens'."

"I wish to be so—but, in the interest of their salvation, and to make these measures really efficacious, I must attach some conditions to the support I offer you."

"Name them, father; they are accepted beforehand. Your commands shall be obeyed in everything."

"First of all, then, the children must be taken this very morning to the convent by my housekeeper, to whom you must bring them almost immediately."

"Nay, father; that is impossible!" cried Frances.

"Impossible? why?"

"In the absence of my husband—"

"Well?"

"I dare not take such a step without consulting him."

"Not only must you abstain from consulting him, but the thing must be done during his absence."

"What, father? should I not wait for his return?"

"No, for two reasons," answered the priest, sternly; "first, because his hardened impiety would certainly lead him to oppose your pious resolution; secondly, because it is indispensable that these young girls should break off all connection with your husband, who, therefore, must be left in ignorance of the place of their retreat."

"But, father," said Frances, a prey to cruel doubt and embarrassment, "it is to my husband that these children were intrusted—and to dispose of them without his consent would be—"

"Can you instruct these children at your house—yes or no?" interrupted the voice.

"No, father, I cannot."

"Are they exposed to fall into a state of final impenitence by remaining with you —yes or no?"

"Yes, father, they are so exposed."

"Are you responsible, as you take the place of their parents, for the mortal sins they may commit—yes or no?"

"Alas, father! I am responsible before God."

"Is it in the interest of their eternal salvation that I enjoin you to place them this day in a convent?"

"It is for their salvation, father."

"Well, then, choose!"

"But tell me, I entreat you, father, if I have the right to dispose of them without the consent of my husband?"

"The right! you have not only the right, but it is your sacred duty. Would you not be bound, I ask you, to rescue these unfortunate creatures from a fire, against the will of your husband, or during his absence? Well! you must now rescue them, not from a fire that will only consume the body, but from one in which their souls would burn to all eternity."

"Forgive me, I implore you, father," said the poor woman, whose indecision and anguish increased every minute; "satisfy my doubts! How can I act thus, when I have sworn obedience to my husband?"

"Obedience for good—yes—but never for evil. You confess that, were it left to him, the salvation of these orphans

would be doubtful, and perhaps impossible."

"But, father," said Frances, trembling, "when my husband returns he will ask me where are these children? Must I tell him a falsehood?"

"Silence is not falsehood; you will tell him that you cannot answer his question."

"My husband is the kindest of men; but such an answer will drive him almost mad. He has been a soldier, and his anger will be terrible, father," said Frances, shuddering at the thought.

"And were his anger a hundred times more terrible, you should be proud to brave it in so sacred a cause!" cried the voice with indignation. "Do you think that salvation is to be so easily gained on earth? Since when does the sinner, that would walk in the way of the Lord, turn aside for the stones and briers that may bruise and tear him?"

"Pardon, father, pardon!" said Frances, with the resignation of despair. "Permit me to ask one more question, one only. Alas! if you do not guide me, how shall I find the way?"

"Speak!"

"When Marshal Simon arrives, he will ask his children of my husband. What

answer can he then give to their father?"

"When Marshal Simon arrives, you will let me know immediately, and then—I will see what is to be done. The rights of a father are only sacred in so far as he makes use of them for the salvation of his children. Before and above the father on earth is the Father in Heaven, whom we must first serve. Reflect upon all this. By accepting what I propose to you, these young girls will be saved from perdition; they will not be at your charge; they will not partake of your misery; they will be brought up in a sacred institution, as, after all, the daughters of a Marshal of France ought to be—and, when their father arrives at Paris, if he be found worthy of seeing them again, instead of finding poor, ignorant, half-savage heathens, he will behold two girls, pious, modest, and well-informed, who, being acceptable with the Almighty, may invoke His mercy for their father, who, it must be owned, has great need of it—being a man of violence, war, and battle. Now decide! Will you, on peril of your soul, sacrifice the welfare of these girls in this world and the next, because of an impious dread of your husband's anger?"

Though rude and fettered by intolerance,

the confessor's language was (taking his view of the case) reasonable and just, because the honest priest was himself convinced of what he said; a blind instrument of Rodin, ignorant of the end in view, he believed firmly that, in forcing Frances to place these young girls in a convent, he was performing a pious duty. Such was, and is, one of the most wonderful resources of the order to which Rodin belonged—to have for accomplices good and sincere people, who are ignorant of the nature of the plots in which they are the principal actors.

Frances, long accustomed to submit to the influence of her confessor, could find nothing to object to his last words. She resigned herself to follow his directions, though she trembled to think of the furious anger of Dagobert, when he should no longer find the children that a dying mother had confided to his care. But, according to the priest's opinion, the more terrible this anger might appear to her, the more she would show her pious humility by exposing herself to it.

"God's will be done, father!" said she, in reply to her confessor. "Whatever may happen, I will do my duty as a Christian —in obedience to your commands."

"And the Lord will reward you for what you may have to suffer in the accomplishment of this meritorious act. You promise then, before God, that you will not answer any of your husband's questions when he asks you for the daughters of Marshal Simon?"

"Yes, father, I promise!" said Frances, with a shudder.

"And will preserve the same silence toward Marshal Simon himself, in case he should return, before his daughters appear to me sufficiently grounded in the faith to be restored to him?"

"Yes, father," said Frances, in a still fainter voice.

"You will come and give me an account of the scene that takes place between you and your husband, upon his return?"

"Yes, father; when must I bring the orphans to your house?"

"In an hour. I will write to the superior, and leave the letter with my housekeeper. She is a trusty person, and will conduct the young girls to the convent."

After she had listened to the exhortations of her confessor, and received absolution for her late sins, on condition of performing penance, Dagobert's wife left the confessional.

The church was no longer deserted. An immense crowd pressed into it, drawn thither by the pomp of the grand funeral of which the beadle had spoken to the sacristan two hours before. It was with the greatest difficulty that Frances could reach the door of the church, now hung with sumptuous drapery.

What a contrast to the poor and humble train which had that morning so timidly presented themselves beneath the porch!

The numerous clergy of the parish, in full procession, advanced majestically to receive the coffin covered with a velvet pall; the watered silks and stuffs of their copes and stoles, their splendid silvered embroideries, sparkled in the light of a thousand tapers. The beadle strutted in all the glory of his brilliant uniform and flashing epaulets; on the opposite side walked in high glee the sacristan; carrying his whalebone staff with a magisterial air; the voice of the choristers, now clad in fresh, white surplices, rolled out in bursts of thunder; the trumpets' blare shook the windows; and upon the countenances of all those who were to have a share in the spoils of this rich corpse, this excellent corpse, this first-class corpse, a look of satisfaction was visible, intense and

yet subdued, which suited admirably with the air and attitude of the two heirs, tall, vigorous fellows with florid complexions, who, without overstepping the limits of a charming modesty of enjoyment, seemed to cuddle and hug themselves most comfortably in their mourning-cloaks.

Notwithstanding her simplicity and pious faith, Dagobert's wife was painfully impressed with this revolting difference between the reception of the rich and the poor man's coffin at the door of the house of God—for surely, if equality be ever real, it is in the presence of death and eternity!

The two sad spectacles she had witnessed tended still further to depress the spirits of Frances. Having succeeded with no small trouble in making her way out of the church, she hastened to return to the Rue Brise-Miche, in order to fetch the orphans and conduct them to the housekeeper of her confessor, who was in her turn to take them to St. Mary's Convent, situated, as we know, next door to Dr. Baleinier's lunatic asylum, in which Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MY LORD AND SPOILSPORT.

THE wife of Dagobert, having quitted the church, arrived at the corner of the Rue Brise-Miche, when she was accosted by the distributor of holy-water; he came running out of breath, to beg her to return to Saint-Mery's, where the Abbe Dubois had yet something of importance to say to her.

The moment Frances turned to go back, a hackney-coach stopped in front of the house she inhabited. The coachman quitted his box to open the door.

"Driver," said a stout woman dressed in black, who was seated in the carriage and held a pug-dog upon her knees, "ask if Mrs. Frances Baudoin lives in this house."

"Yes, ma'am," said the coachman.

The reader will no doubt have recognized Mrs. Grivois, head waiting-woman to the Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by My Lord, who exercised a real tyranny over his mistress. The dyer, whom we have already seen performing the duties of a porter, being questioned by the coachman as to the dwelling of Frances, came

out of his workshop, and advanced gallantly to the coach-door, to inform Mrs. Grivois that Frances Baudoin did in fact live in the house, but that she was at present from home.

The arms, hands, and part of the face of Father Loriot were now of a superb gold-color. The sight of this yellow personage singularly provoked My Lord, and at the moment the dyer rested his hand upon the edge of the coach-window, the cur began to yelp frightfully and bit him in the wrist.

"Oh! gracious heaven!" cried Mrs. Grivois, in an agony, while Father Loriot withdrew his hand with precipitation; "I hope there is nothing poisonous in the dye that you have about you—my dog is so delicate!"

So saying, she carefully wiped the pug-nose, spotted with yellow. Father Loriot, not at all satisfied with this speech, when he had expected to receive some apology from Mrs. Grivois on account of her dog's behavior, said to her, as with difficulty he restrained his anger: "If you did not belong to the fair sex, which obliges me to respect you in the person of that wretched animal, I would have the pleasure of taking him by the tail, and making him in

one minute a dog of the brightest orange color, by plunging him into my cauldron, which is already on the fire."

"Dye my pet yellow!" cried Mrs. Grivois, in great wrath, as she descended from the hackney-coach, clasping My Lord tenderly to her bosom, and surveying Father Loriot with a savage look.

"I told you, Mrs. Baudoin is not at home," said the dyer, as he saw the pug-dog's mistress advance in the direction of the dark staircase.

"Never mind; I will wait for her," said Mrs. Grivois tartly. "On which story does she live?"

"Up four pair!" answered Father Loriot, returning abruptly to his shop. And he added to himself, with a chuckle at the anticipation: "I hope Father Dagobert's big growler will be in a bad humor, and give that villainous pug a shaking by the skin of his neck."

Mrs. Grivois mounted the steep staircase with some difficulty, stopping at every landing-place to take breath, and looking about her with profound disgust. At length she reached the fourth story, and paused an instant at the door of the humble chamber, in which the two sisters and Mother Bunch then were.

The young seamstress was occupied in collecting the different articles that she was about to carry to the pawnbroker's. Rose and Blanche seemed happier, and somewhat less uneasy about the future; for they had learned from Mother Bunch that, when they knew how to sew, they might between them earn eight francs a week, which would at least afford some assistance to the family.

The presence of Mrs. Grivois in Baudoin's dwelling was occasioned by a new resolution of Abbe d'Aigrigny and the Princess de Saint-Dizier; they had thought it more prudent to send Mrs. Grivois, on whom they could blindly depend, to fetch the young girls, and the confessor was charged to inform Frances that it was not to his housekeeper, but to a lady that would call on her with a note from him, that she was to deliver the orphans, to be taken to a religious establishment.

Having knocked at the door, the waiting-woman of the Princess de Saint-Dizier entered the room, and asked for Frances Baudoin.

"She is not at home, madame," said Mother Bunch timidly, not a little astonished at so unexpected a visit, and casting down her eyes before the gaze of this woman.

"Then I will wait for her, as I have important affairs to speak of," answered Mrs. Grivois, examining with curiosity and attention the faces of the two orphans, who also cast down their eyes with an air of confusion.

So saying, Madame Grivois sat down, not without some repugnance, in the old armchair of Dagobert's wife, and believing that she might now leave her favorite at liberty, she laid him carefully on the floor. Immediately a low growl, deep and hollow, sounding from behind the armchair, made Mrs. Grivois jump from her seat, and sent the pug-dog, yelping with affright, and trembling through his fat, to take refuge close to his mistress, with all the symptoms of angry alarm.

"What! is there a dog here?" cried Mrs. Grivois, stooping precipitately to catch up My Lord, while, as if he wished himself to answer the question, Spoilsport rose leisurely from his place behind the armchair, and appeared suddenly, yawning and stretching himself.

At sight of this powerful animal, with his double row of formidable pointed fangs, which he seemed to take delight in displaying as he opened his large jaws, Mrs. Grivois could not help giving utterance to

a cry of terror. The snappish pug had at first trembled in all his limbs at the Siberian's approach; but, finding himself in safety on the lap of his mistress, he began to growl insolently, and to throw the most provoking glances at Spoilsport. These the worthy companion of the deceased Jovial answered disdainfully by gaping anew; after which he went smelling round Mrs. Grivois with a sort of uneasiness, turned his back upon My Lord, and stretched himself at the feet of Rose and Blanche, keeping his large, intelligent eyes fixed upon them, as if he foresaw that they were menaced with some danger.

"Turn out that beast," said Mrs. Grivois, imperiously; "he frightens my dog, and may do him some harm."

"Do not be afraid, madame," replied Rose, with a smile; "Spoilsport will do no harm, if he is not attacked."

"Never mind!" cried Mrs. Grivois; "an accident soon happens. The very sight of that enormous dog, with his wolf's head and terrible teeth, is enough to make one tremble at the injuries he might do one. I tell you to turn him out."

Mrs. Grivois had pronounced these last words in a tone of irritation, which did not sound at all satisfactory in Spoilsport's

ears; so he growled and showed his teeth, turning his head in the direction of the stranger.

"Be quiet, Spoilsport!" said Blanche, sternly.

A new personage here entered the room and put an end to this situation, which was embarrassing enough for the two young girls. It was a commissionaire, with a letter in his hand.

"What is it, sir?" asked Mother Bunch.

"A very pressing letter from the good man of the house; the dyer below stairs told me to bring it up here."

"A letter from Dagobert!" cried Rose and Blanche, with a lively expression of pleasure. "He is returned, then? where is he?"

"I do not know whether the good man is called Dagobert or not," said the porter; "but he is an old trooper, with a gray mustache, and may be found close by, at the office of the Chartres coaches."

"That is he!" cried Blanche. "Give me the letter."

The porter handed it to the young girl, who opened it in all haste.

Mrs. Grivois was struck dumb with dismay; she knew that Dagobert had been

decoyed from Paris that the Abbe Dubois might have an opportunity to act with safety upon Frances. Hitherto, all had succeeded; the good woman had consented to place the young girls in the hands of a religious community—and now arrives this soldier, who was thought to be absent from Paris for two or three days at least, and whose sudden return might easily ruin this laborious machination at the very moment when it seemed to promise success.

"Oh!" said Blanche, when she had read the letter. "What a misfortune!"

"What is it, then, sister?" cried Rose.

"Yesterday, half way to Chartres, Dagobert perceived that he had lost his purse. He was unable to continue his journey; he took a place upon credit, to return, and he asks his wife to send him some money to the office, to pay what he owes."

"That's it," said the porter; "for the good man told me to make haste, because he was there in pledge."

"And nothing in the house!" cried Blanche. "Dear me! what is to be done?"

At these words, Mrs. Grivois felt her hopes revive for a moment; they were soon, however, dispelled by Mother Bunch, who exclaimed, as she pointed to the par-

cal she had just made up: "Be satisfied, dear young ladies! here is a resource. The pawnbroker's to which I am going is not far off, and I will take the money direct to M. Dagobert; in half-an-hour, at latest, he will be here."

"Oh, my dear friend! you are right," said Rose. "How good you are! you think of everything."

"And here," said Blanche, "is the letter, with the address upon it. Take that with you."

"Thank you," answered Mother Bunch; then, addressing the porter, she added: "Return to the person who sent you, and tell him I shall be at the coach-office very shortly."

"Infernal hunchback!" thought Mrs. Grivois, with suppressed rage, "she thinks of everything. Without her, we should have escaped the plague of this man's return. What is to be done now? The girls would not go with me, before the arrival of the soldier's wife: to propose it to them would expose me to a refusal, and might compromise all. Once more, what is to be done?"

"Do not be uneasy, ladies," said the porter as he went out; "I will go and assure the good man that he will not have to remain long in pledge."

While Mother Bunch was occupied in tying her parcel, in which she had placed the silver cup, fork, and spoon, Mrs. Grivois seemed to reflect deeply. Suddenly she started. Her countenance, which had been for some moments expressive of anxiety and rage, brightened up on the instant. She rose, still holding My Lord in her arms, and said to the young girls: "As Mrs. Baudoin does not come in, I am going to pay a visit in the neighborhood, and will return immediately. Pray tell her so!"

With these words, Mrs. Grivois took her departure, a few minutes before Mother Bunch left.

CHAPTER L.

APPEARANCES.

After she had again endeavored to cheer up the orphans, the sewing girl descended the stairs, not without difficulty, for, in addition to the parcel, which was already heavy, she had fetched down from her own room the only blanket she possessed—thus leaving herself without protection from the cold of her icy garret.

The evening before, tortured with anx-

iety as to Agricola's fate, the girl had been unable to work; the miseries of expectation and hope delayed had prevented her from doing so; now another day would be lost, and yet it was necessary to live. Those overwhelming sorrows, which deprive the poor of the faculty of labor, are doubly dreaded; they paralyze the strength, and, with that forced cessation from toil, want and destitution are often added to grief.

But Mother Bunch, that complete incarnation of holiest duty, had yet strength enough to devote herself for the service of others. Some of the most frail and feeble creatures are endowed with extraordinary vigor of soul; it would seem as if, in these weak, infirm organizations, the spirit reigned absolute over the body, and knew how to inspire it with a factitious energy.

Thus, for the last twenty-four hours, Mother Bunch had neither slept nor eaten; she had suffered from the cold, through the whole of a frosty night. In the morning she had endured great fatigue, in going, amid rain and snow, to the Rue de Babylone and back, twice crossing Paris —and yet her strength was not exhausted —so immense is the power of the human heart!

She had just arrived at the corner of the Rue Saint Mery. Since the recent Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy, there were stationed in this populous quarter of the town a much larger number of police-officers than usual. Now the young seamstress, though bending beneath the weight of her parcel, had quickened her pace almost to a run, when, just as she passed in front of one of the police, two five-franc pieces fell on the ground behind her, thrown there by a stout woman in black, who followed her closely.

Immediately after, the stout woman pointed out the two pieces to the policeman, and said something hastily to him with regard to Mother Bunch. Then she withdrew at all speed in the direction of the Rue Brise-Miche.

The policeman, struck with what Mrs. Grivois had said to him (for it was that person), picked up the money, and, running after the humpback, cried out to her: "Hi, there! young woman, I say—stop! stop!"

On this outcry, several persons turned round suddenly, and, as always happens in those quarters of the town, a nucleus of five or six persons soon grew to a considerable crowd.

Not knowing that the policeman was calling to her, Mother Bunch only quickened her speed, wishing to get to the pawnbroker's as soon as possible, and trying to avoid touching any of the passers-by, so much did she dread the brutal and cruel railleries to which her infirmity so often exposed her.

Suddenly, she heard many persons running after her, and at the same instant a hand was laid rudely on her shoulder. It was the policeman, followed by another officer, who had been drawn to the spot by the noise. Mother Bunch turned round, struck with as much surprise as fear.

She found herself in the center of a crowd, composed chiefly of that hideous scum, idle and in rags, insolent and malicious, besotted with ignorance, brutalized by want, and always loafing about the corners. Workmen are scarcely ever met with in these mobs, for they are for the most part engaged in their daily labors.

"Come, can't you hear? you are deaf as Punch's dog," said the policeman, seizing Mother Bunch so rudely by the arm that she let her parcel fall at her feet.

When the unfortunate girl, looking round in terror, saw herself exposed to all those insolent, mocking, malicious glances;

when she beheld the synical and coarse grimace on so many ignoble and filthy countenances, she trembled in all her limbs, and became fearfully pale. No doubt the policeman had spoken roughly to her; but how could he speak otherwise to a poor deformed girl, pale and trembling, with her features agitated by grief and fear—to a wretched creature, miserably clad, who wore in winter a thin cotton gown, soiled with mud, and wet with melted snow—for the poor seamstress had walked much and far that morning. So the policeman resumed, with great severity, following that supreme law of appearances which makes poverty always suspected: "Stop a bit, young woman! it seems you are in a mighty hurry, to let your money fall without picking it up."

"Was her blunt hid in her hump?" said the hoarse voice of a match-boy, a hideous and repulsive specimen of precocious depravity.

This sally was received with laughter, shouts, and hooting, which served to complete the sewing girl's dismay and terror. She was hardly able to answer, in a feeble voice, as the policeman handed her the two pieces of silver: "The money, sir, is not mine."

"You lie," said the other officer, approaching; "a respectable lady saw it drop from your pocket."

"I assure you, sir, it is not so," answered Mother Bunch, trembling.

"I tell you that you lie," resumed the officer; "for the lady, struck with your guilty and frightened air, said to me: 'Look at yonder little hunchback, running away with that large parcel, and letting her money fall without even stopping to pick it up—it is not natural.' "

"Bobby," resumed the match-vender in his hoarse voice, "be on your guard! Feel her hump, for that is her luggage-van. I'm sure that you'll find boots, and cloaks, and umbrellas, and clocks in it—for I just heard the hour strike in the bend of her back."

Then came fresh bursts of laughter and shouts and hooting, for this horrible mob has no pity for those who implore and suffer. The crowd increased more and more, and now they indulged in hoarse cries, piercing whistles, and all kinds of horse-play.

"Let a fellow see her; it's free gratis."

"Don't push so; I've paid for my place!"

"Make her stand up on something, that all may have a look."

"My corns are being ground; it was not worth coming."

"Show her properly — or return the money."

"That's fair, ain't it?"

"Give it us in the 'garden' style."

"Trot her out in all her paces! Kim up!"

Fancy the feelings of this unfortunate creature, with her delicate mind, good heart, and lofty soul, and yet with so timid and nervous a character, as she stood alone with the two policemen in the thick of the crowd, and was forced to listen to all these coarse and savage insults.

But the young seamstress did not yet understand of what crime she was accused. She soon discovered it, however, for the policeman, seizing the parcel which she had picked up, and now held in her trembling hands, said to her rudely: "What is there in that bundle?"

"Sir—it is—I am going—" The unfortunate girl hesitated — unable, in her terror, to find the word.

"If that's all you have to answer," said the policeman, "it's no great shakes. Come, make haste! turn your bundle inside out."

So saying, the policeman snatched the

parcel from her, half opened it, and repeated, as he enumerated the divers articles it contained: "The devil!—sheets—a spoon and fork—a silver mug—a shawl—a blanket—you're a downy mot! it was not so bad a move. Dressed like a beggar, and with silver plate about you. Oh, yes! you're a deep 'un."

"Those articles do not belong to you," said the other officer.

"No, sir," replied Mother Bunch, whose strength was failing her; "but—"

"Oh, vile hunchback! you have stolen more than you are big!"

"Stolen!" cried Mother Bunch, clasping her hands in horror, for she now understood it all. "Stolen!"

"The guard! make way for the sogers!" cried several persons at once.

"Oh, ho! here's the lobsters!"

"The fire-eaters!"

"The Arab-devourers!"

"Come for their dromedary!"

In the midst of these noisy jests, two soldiers and a corporal advanced with much difficulty. Their bayonets and the barrels of their guns were alone visible above the heads of this hideous and compact crowd. Some officious person had been to inform the officer at the nearest

guard-house that a considerable crowd obstructed the public way.

"Come, here is the guard—so march to the guard-house!" said the policeman, taking Mother Bunch by the arm.

"Sir," said the poor girl, in a voice stifled by sobs, clasping her hands in terror, and sinking upon her knees on the pavement; "sir—have pity—let me explain—"

"You will explain at the guard-house; so come on!"

"But, sir—I am not a thief," cried Mother Bunch, in a heartrending tone; "have pity upon me—do not take me away like a thief, before all this crowd. Oh! mercy! mercy!"

"I tell you, there will be time to explain at the guard-house. The street is blocked up; so come along!" Grasping the unfortunate creature by both her hands, he set her, as it were, on her feet again.

At this instant, the corporal and his two soldiers, having succeeded in making their way through the crowd, approached the policeman. "Corporal," said the latter, "take this girl to the guard-house. I am an officer of the police."

"Oh, gentlemen!" cried the girl, weeping hot tears, and wringing her hands,

"do not take me away, before you let me explain myself. I am not a thief—indeed, indeed, I am not a thief! I will tell you—it was to render service to others—only let me tell you—"

"I tell you, you should give your explanations at the guard-house; if you will not walk, we must drag you along," said the policeman.

We must renounce the attempt to paint this scene, at once ignoble and terrible.

Weak, overpowered, filled with alarm, the unfortunate girl was dragged along by the soldiers, her knees sinking under her at every step. The two police-officers had each to lend an arm to support her, and mechanically she accepted their assistance. Then the vociferations and hootings burst forth with redoubled fury. Half-swooning between the two men, the hapless creature seemed to drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs.

Beneath that foggy sky, in that dirty street, under the shadow of the tall black houses, those hideous masses of people reminded one of the wildest fancies of Callot and of Goya; children in rags, drunken women, grim and blighted figures of men, rushed against each other, pushed, fought, struggled, to follow with howls and hisses

an almost inanimate victim—the victim of a deplorable mistake.

Of a mistake! How one shudders to think that such arrests may often take place, founded upon nothing but the suspicion caused by the appearance of misery, or by some inaccurate description. Can we forget the case of that young girl, who, wrongfully accused of participating in a shameful traffic, found means to escape from the persons who were leading her to prison, and, rushing up the stairs of a house, threw herself from a window, in her despair, and was crushed to death upon the paving-stones.

Meanwhile, after the abominable denunciation of which Mother Bunch was the victim, Mrs. Grivois had returned precipitately to the Rue Brise-Miche. She ascended in haste to the fourth story, opened the door of Frances Baudoin's room, and saw — Dagobert in company with his wife and the two orphans!

CHAPTER LI.

THE CONVENT.

LET us explain in a few words the presence of Dagobert. His countenance was impressed with such an air of military frankness that the manager of the coach-office would have been satisfied with his promise to return and pay the money; but the soldier had obstinately insisted on remaining in pledge, as he called it, till his wife had answered his letter. When, however, on the return of the porter, he found that the money was coming, his scruples were satisfied, and he hastened to run home.

We may imagine the stupor of Mrs. Grivois, when, upon entering the chamber, she perceived Dagobert (whom she easily recognized by the description she had heard of him) seated beside his wife and the orphans. The anxiety of Frances at sight of Mrs. Grivois was equally striking. Rose and Blanche had told her of the visit of a lady, during her absence, upon important business; and, judging by the information received from her confessor, Frances had no doubt that this was the

person charged to conduct the orphans to a religious establishment.

Her anxiety was terrible. Resolved to follow the counsels of the Abbe Dubois, she dreaded lest a word from Mrs. Grivois should put Dagobert on the scent—in which case all would be lost, and the orphans would remain in their present state of ignorance and mortal sin, for which she believed herself responsible.

Dagobert, who held the hands of Rose and Blanche, left his seat as the Princess de Saint-Dizier's waiting-woman entered the room, and cast an inquiring glance on Frances.

The moment was critical—nay, decisive; but Mrs. Grivois had profited by the example of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. So, taking her resolution at once, and turning to account the precipitation with which she had mounted the stairs, after the odious charge she had brought against poor Mother Bunch, and even the emotion caused by the unexpected sight of Dagobert, which gave to her features an expression of uneasiness and alarm—she exclaimed, in an agitated voice, after the moment's silence necessary to collect her thoughts: "Oh, madame! I have just been the spectator of a great misfortune. Excuse my agitation! but I am so excited—"

"Dear me! what is the matter?" said Frances, in a trembling voice, for she dreaded every moment some indiscretion on the pärt of Mrs. Grivois.

"I called just now," resumed the other, "to speak to you on some important business; while I was waiting for you, a poor young woman, rather deformed, put up sundry articles in a parcel—"

"Yes," said Frances; "it was Mother Bunch, an excellent, worthy creature."

"I thought as much, madame; well, you shall hear what has happened. As you did not come in, I resolved to pay a visit in the neighborhood. I go out, and get as far as the Rue St. Mery, when—Oh, madame!"

"Well?" said Dagobert, "what then?"

"I see a crowd—I inquire what is the matter—I learn that a policeman has just arrested a young girl as a thief, because she had been seen carrying a bundle, composed of different articles which did not appear to belong to her. I approached—what do I behold?—the same young woman that I had met just before in this room."

"Oh! the poor child!" exclaimed Frances, growing pale and clasping her hands together. "What a dreadful thing!"

"Explain, then," said Dagobert to his wife. "What was in this bundle?"

"Well, my dear—to confess the truth—I was a little short, and I asked our poor friend to take some things for me to the pawnbroker's—"

"What! and they thought she had robbed us?" cried Dagobert; "she, the most honest girl in the world! it is dreadful—you ought to have interfered, madame; you ought to have said that you knew her."

"I tried to do so, sir; but, unfortunately, they would not hear me. The crowd increased every moment, till the guard came up and carried her off."

"She might die of it, she is so sensitive and timid!" exclaimed Frances.

"Ah, good Mother Bunch! so gentle! so considerate!" said Blanche, turing with tearful eyes toward her sister.

"Not being able to help her," resumed Mrs. Grivois, "I hastened hither to inform you of this misadventure—which may, indeed, easily be repaired—as it will only be necessary to go and claim the young girl as soon as possible."

At these words, Dagobert hastily seized his hat, and said abruptly to Mrs. Grivois: "Zounds, madame! you should have be-

gun by telling us that. Where is the poor child? Do you know?"

"I do not, sir; but there are still so many excited people in the street that, if you will have the kindness to step out, you will be sure to learn."

"Why the devil do you talk of kindness? It is my duty, madame. Poor child!" repeated Dagobert. "Taken up as a thief! —it is really horrible. I will go to the guard-house, and to the commissary of police for this neighborhood, and, by hook or crook, I will find her, and have her out, and bring her home with me."

So saying, Dagobert hastily departed. Frances, now that she felt more tranquil as to the fate of Mother Bunch, thanked the Lord that this circumstance had obliged her husband to go out, for his presence at this juncture caused her a terrible embarrassment.

Mrs. Grivois had left My Lord in the coach below, for the moments were precious. Casting a significant glance at Frances, she handed her Abbe Dubois' letter, and said to her, with strong emphasis on every word: "You will see by this letter, madame, what was the object of my visit, which I have not before been able to explain to you, but on which I

truly congratulate myself, as it brings me into connection with these two charming young ladies."

Rose and Blanche looked at each other in surprise. Frances took the letter with a trembling hand. It required all the pressing and threatening injunctions of her confessor to conquer the last scruples of the poor woman, for she shuddered at the thought of Dagobert's terrible indignation. Moreover, in her simplicity, she knew not how to announce to the young girls that they were to accompany this lady.

Mrs. Grivois guessed her embarrassment, made a sign to her to be at her ease, and said to Rose, while Frances was reading the letter of her confessor: "How happy your relation will be to see you, my dear young lady!"

"Our relation, madame?" said Rose, more and more astonished.

"Certainly. She knew of your arrival here, but, as she is still suffering from the effects of a long illness, she was not able to come herself to day, and has sent me to fetch you to her. Unfortunately," added Mrs. Grivois, perceiving a movement of uneasiness on the part of the two sisters, "it will not be in her power, as she tells

Mrs. Baudoin in her letter, to see you for more than a very short time—so you may be back here in about an hour. But to-morrow, or the next day after, she will be well enough to leave home, and then she will come and make arrangements with Mrs. Baudoin and her husband, to take you into her house—for she could not bear to leave you at the charge of the worthy people who have been so kind to you."

These last words of Mrs. Grivois made a favorable impression upon the two sisters, and banished their fears of becoming a heavy burden to Dagobert's family. If it had been proposed to them to quit altogether the house in the Rue Brise-Miche, without first asking the consent of their old friend, they would certainly have hesitated; but Mrs. Grivois had only spoken of an hour's visit. They felt no suspicion, therefore, and Rose said to Frances: "We may go and see our relation, I suppose, madame, without waiting for Dagobert's return?"

"Certainly," said Frances, in a feeble voice, "since you are to be back almost directly."

"Then, madame, I would beg these dear young ladies to come with me as soon as possible, as I should like to bring them back before noon."

"We are ready, madame," said Rose.

"Well, then, young ladies, embrace your second mother, and come," said Mrs. Grivois, who was hardly able to control her uneasiness, for she trembled lest Dagobert should return from one moment to the other.

Rose and Blanche embraced Frances, who, clasping in her arms the two charming and innocent creatures that she was about to deliver up, could with difficulty restrain her tears, though she was fully convinced that she was acting for their salvation.

"Come, young ladies," said Mrs. Grivois, in the most affable tone, "let us make haste—you will excuse my impatience, I am sure—but it is in the name of your relation that I speak."

Having once more tenderly kissed the wife of Dagobert, the sisters quitted the room hand in hand, and descended the staircase close behind Mrs. Grivois, followed (without their being aware of it) by Spoilsport. The intelligent animal cautiously watched their movements, for, in the absence of his master, he never let them out of his sight.

For greater security, no doubt, the waiting-woman of Madame de Saint-Dizier had

ordered the hackney-coach to wait for her at a little distance from the Rue Brise-Miche, in the cloister square. In a few seconds, the orphans and their conductress reached the carriage.

"Oh, missus!" said the coachman, opening the door; "no offense, I hope—but you have the most ill-tempered rascal of a dog! Since you put him into my coach, he has never ceased howling like a roasted cat, and looks as if he would eat us all up alive!" In fact, My Lord, who detested solitude, was yelling in the most deplorable manner.

"Be quiet, My Lord! here I am," said Mrs. Grivois; then, addressing the two sisters, she added: "Pray get in, my dear young ladies."

Rose and Blanche got into the coach. Before she followed them, Mrs. Grivois was giving to the coachman in a low voice the direction to St. Mary's Convent, and was adding other instructions, when suddenly the pug-dog, who had growled savagely when the sisters took their seats in the coach, began to bark with fury. The cause of this anger was clear enough; Spoilsport, until now unperceived, had with one bound entered the carriage.

The pug, exasperated by this boldness,

forgetting his ordinary prudence, and excited to the utmost by rage and ugliness of temper, sprang at his muzzle, and bit him so cruelly, that, in his turn, the brave Siberian dog, maddened by pain, threw himself upon the teaser, seized him by the throat, and fairly strangled him with two grips of his powerful jaws—as appeared by one stifled groan of the pug, previously half suffocated with fat.

All this took place in less time than is occupied by the description. Rose and Blanche had hardly opportunity to exclaim twice: "Here, Spoilsport! down!"

"Oh, good gracious!" said Mrs. Grivois, turning round at the noise. "There again is that monster of a dog—he will certainly hurt my love. Send him away, young ladies—make him get down—it is impossible to take him with us."

Ignorant of the degree of Spoilsport's criminality, for his paltry foe was stretched lifeless under a seat, the young girls yet felt that it would be improper to take the dog with them, and they therefore said to him in an angry tone, at the same time slightly touching him with their feet: "Get down, Spoilsport! go away!"

The faithful animal hesitated at first to obey this order. Sad and supplicatingly

looked he at the orphans, and with an air of mild reproach, as if blaming them for sending away their only defender. But upon the stern repetition of the command, he got down from the coach, with his tail between his legs, feeling perhaps that he had been somewhat over-hasty with regard to the pug.

Mrs. Grivois, who was in a great hurry to leave that quarter of the town, seated herself with precipitation in the carriage; the coachman closed the door and mounted his box; and then the coach started at a rapid rate, while Mrs. Grivois prudently let down the blinds, for fear of meeting Dagobert by the way.

Having taken these indispensable precautions, she was able to turn her attention to her pet, whom she loved with all that deep, exaggerated affection which people of a bad disposition sometimes entertain for animals, as if they concentrated and lavished upon them all those feelings in which they are deficient with regard to their fellow-creatures. In a word, Mrs. Grivois was passionately attached to this peevish, cowardly, spiteful dog, partly perhaps from a secret sympathy with his vices. This attachment had lasted for six years, and only seemed to increase as My Lord advanced in age.

We have laid some stress on this apparently puerile detail, because the most trifling causes have often diastrous effects, and because we wish the reader to understand what must have been the despair, fury, and exasperation of this woman, when she discovered the death of her dog —a despair, a fury, and an exasperation, of which the orphans might yet feel the cruel consequences.

The hackney-coach had proceeded rapidly for some seconds, when Mrs. Grivois, who was seated with her back to the horses, called My Lord. The dog had very good reasons for not replying.

"Well, you sulky beauty!" said Mrs. Grivois, soothingly; "you have taken offense, have you? It was not my fault if that great ugly dog came into the coach, was it, young ladies? Come and kiss your mistress, and let us make peace, old obstinate!"

The same obstinate silence continued on the part of the canine noble. Rose and Blanche began to look anxiously at each other, for they knew that Spoilsport was somewhat rough in his ways, though they were far from suspecting what had really happened. But Mrs. Grivois, rather surprised than uneasy at her pug-dog's in-

sensibility to her affectionate appeals, and believing him to be sullenly crouching beneath the seat, stooped down to take him up, and feeling one of his paws, drew it impatiently toward her, while she said to him in a half-jesting, half-angry tone: "Come, naughty fellow! you will give a pretty notion of your temper to these young ladies."

So saying, she took up the dog, much astonished at his unresisting torpor; but what was her fright when, having placed him upon her lap, she saw that he was quite motionless.

"An apoplexy!" cried she. "The dear creature ate too much. I was always afraid of it."

Turning round hastily, she exclaimed: "Stop, coachman! stop!" without reflecting that the coachman could not hear her. Then raising the cur's head, still thinking that he was only in a fit, she perceived with horror the bloody holes imprinted by five or six sharp fangs, which left no doubt of the cause of his deplorable end.

Her first impulse was one of grief and despair. "Dead!" she exclaimed; "dead! and already cold! Oh, goodness!" And this woman burst into tears.

The tears of the wicked are ominous.

For a bad man to weep, he must have suffered much; and, with him, the reaction of suffering, instead of softening the soul, inflames it to a dangerous anger.

Thus, after yielding to that first painful emotion, the mistress of My Lord felt herself transported with rage and hate—yes, hate—violent hate for the young girls, who had been the involuntary cause of the dog's death. Her countenance so plainly betrayed her resentment, that Blanche and Rose were frightened at the expression of her face, which had now grown purple with fury, as with agitated voice and wrathful glance she exclaimed: "It was your dog that killed him!"

"Oh, madame!" said Rose; "we had nothing to do with it."

"It was your dog that bit Spoilsport first," added Blanche, in a plaintive voice.

The look of terror impressed on the features of the orphans recalled Mrs. Grivois to herself. She saw the fatal consequences that might arise from yielding imprudently to her anger. For the very sake of vengeance, she had to restrain herself, in order not to awaken suspicion in the minds of Marshal Simon's daughters. But not to appear to recover too soon from her first

impression, she continued for some minutes to cast irritated glances at the young girls; then, little by little, her anger seemed to give way to violent grief; she covered her face with her hands, heaved a long sigh, and appeared to weep bitterly.

"Poor lady!" whispered Rose to Blanche. "How she weeps! No doubt she loved her dog as much as we love Spoilsport."

"Alas! yes," replied Blanche. "We also wept when our old Jovial was killed."

After a few minutes, Mrs. Grivois raised her head, dried her eyes definitively, and said in a gentle, and almost affectionate voice: "Forgive me, young ladies! I was unable to repress the first movement of irritation, or rather of deep sorrow—for I was tenderly attached to this poor dog—he has never left me for six years."

"We are very sorry for this misfortune, madame," resumed Rose; "and we regret it the more, that it seems to be irreparable."

"I was just saying to my sister, that we can the better fancy your grief, as we have had to mourn the death of our old horse, that carried us all the way from Siberia."

"Well, my dear young ladies, let us think no more about it. It was my fault; I should not have brought him with me;

but he was always so miserable whenever I left him. You will make allowances for my weakness. A good heart feels for animals as well as people; so I must trust to your sensibility to excuse my hastiness."

"Do not think of it, madame; it is only your grief that afflicts us."

"I shall get over it, my dear young ladies—I shall get over it. The joy of the meeting between you and your relation will help to console me. She will be so happy. You are so charming! and then the singular circumstance of your exact likeness to each other adds to the interest you inspire."

"You are too kind to us, madame."

"Oh, no—I am sure you resemble each other as much in disposition as in face."

"That is quite natural, madame," said Rose, "for since our birth we have never left each other a minute, whether by night or day. It would be strange if we were not like in character."

"Really, my dear young ladies! you have never left each other a minute!"

"Never, madame!" The sisters joined hands with an expressive smile.

"Then, how unhappy you would be, and how much to be pitied, if ever you were separated."

"Oh, madame! it is impossible," said Blanche, smiling.

"How impossible!"

"Who would have the heart to separate us?"

"No doubt, my dear young ladies, it would be very cruel."

"Oh, madame," resumed Blanche, "even very wicked people would not think of separating us."

"So much the better, my dear young ladies—pray, why?"

"Because it would cause us too much grief."

"Because it would kill us."

"Poor little dears!"

"Three months ago we were shut up in prison. Well, when the governor of the prison saw us, though he looked a very stern man, he could not help saying: 'It would be killing these children to separate them;' and so we remained together, and were as happy as one can be in prison."

"It shows your excellent heart, and also that of the persons who knew how to appreciate it."

The carriage stopped and they heard the coachman call out: "Any one at the gate there?"

"Oh! here we are at your relation's,"

said Mrs. Grivois. Two wings of a gate flew open, and the carriage rolled over the gravel of a courtyard.

Mrs. Grivois having drawn up one of the blinds, they found themselves in a vast court, across the center of which ran a high wall, with a kind of porch upon columns, under which was a little door. Behind this wall they could see the upper part of a very large building in freestone. Compared with the house in the Rue Brise-Miche, this building appeared a palace; so Blanche said to Mrs. Grivois, with an expression of artless admiration: "Dear me, madame, what a fine residence!"

"That is nothing," replied Madame Grivois; "wait till you see the interior, which is much finer."

When the coachman opened the door of the carriage, what was the rage of Mrs. Grivois, and the surprise of the girls, to see Spoilsport, who had been clever enough to follow the coach. Pricking up his ears, and wagging his tail, he seemed to have forgotten his late offenses, and expected to be praised for his intelligent fidelity.

"What!" cried Mrs. Grivois, whose sorrows were renewed at the sight; "has that abominable dog followed the coach?"

"A famous dog, mum," answered the

coachman; "he never once left the heels of my horses. He must have been trained to it. He's a powerful beast, and two men couldn't scare him. Look at the throat of him now!"

The mistress of the deceased pug, enraged at the somewhat unseasonable praises bestowed upon the Siberian, said to the orphans, "I will announce your arrival, wait for me an instant in the coach."

So saying, she went with a rapid step toward the porch, and rang the bell. A woman, clad in a monastic garb, appeared at the door, and bowed respectfully to Mrs. Grivois, who addressed her in these few words: "I have brought you the two young girls; the orders of Abbe d'Aigrigny and the princess are, that they be instantly separated, and kept apart in solitary cells—you understand, sister—and subjected to the rule for *impenitents*."

"I will go and inform the superior, and it will be done," said the portress, with another bend.

"Now, will you come, my dear young ladies?" resumed Mrs. Grivois, addressing the two girls, who had secretly bestowed a few caresses upon Spoilsport, so deeply were they touched by his instinctive attachment; "you will be introduced to

your relation, and I will return and fetch you in half-an-hour. Coachman, keep that dog back."

Rose and Blanche, in getting out of the coach, were so much occupied with Spoilsport that they did not perceive the portress, who was half hidden behind the little door. Neither did they remark that the person who was to introduce them was dressed as a nun, till, taking them by the hand, she had led them across the threshhold, when the door was immediately closed behind them.

As soon as Mrs. Grivois had seen the orphans safe into the convent, she told the coachman to leave the courtyard and wait for her at the outer gate. The coachman obeyed; but Spoilsport, who had seen Rose and Blanche enter by the little door, ran to it, and remained there.

Mrs. Grivois then called the porter of the main entrance, a tall, vigorous fellow, and said to him: "Here are ten francs for you, Nicholas, if you will beat out the brains of that great dog who is crouching under the porch."

Nicholas shook his head as he observed Spoilsport's size and strength. "Devil take me, madame!" said he; " 'tis not so easy to tackle a dog of that build."

"I will give you twenty francs; only kill him before me."

"One ought to have a gun, and I have only an iron hammer."

"That will do; you can knock him down at one blow."

"Well, madame—I will try—but I have my doubts." And Nicholas went to fetch his mallet.

"Oh! if I had the strength!" said Mrs. Grivois.

The porter returned with his weapon and advanced slowly and treacherously toward Spoilsport, who was still crouching beneath the porch. "Here, old fellow! here, my good dog!" said Nicholas, striking his left hand on his thigh, and keeping his right hand behind him, with the crowbar raised in it.

Spoilsport rose, examined Nicholas attentively, and no doubt perceiving by his manner that the porter meditated some evil design, bounded away from him, outflanked the enemy, saw clearly what was intended, and kept himself at a respectful distance.

"He smells a rat," said Nicholas; "the rascal's on his guard. He will not let me come near him. It's no go."

"You are an awkward fellow," said

Mrs. Grivois, in a passion, as she threw a five-franc piece to Nicholas; "at all events, drive him away."

"That will be easier than to kill him, madame," said the porter. Indeed, finding himself pursued, and conscious probably that it would be useless to attempt an open resistance, Spoilsport fled from the courtyard into the street; but once there he felt himself, as it were, upon neutral ground, and notwithstanding all the threats of Nicholas, refused to withdraw an inch further than just sufficient to keep out of reach of the sledge-hammer. So that when Mrs. Grivois, pale with rage, again stepped into her hackney-coach, in which were My Lord's lifeless remains, she saw with the utmost vexation that Spoilsport was lying at a few steps from the gate, which Nicholas had just closed, having given up the chase in despair.

The Siberian dog, sure of finding his way back to the Rue Brise-Miche, had determined, with the sagacity peculiar to his race, to wait for the orphans on the spot where he then was.

Thus were the two sisters confined in St. Mary's Convent, which, as we have already said, was next door to the lunatic asylum

in which Adrienne de Cardoville was immured.

. . . . . .

We now conduct the reader to the dwelling of Dagobert's wife, who was waiting with dreadful anxiety for the return of her husband, knowing that he would call her to account for the disappearance of Marshal Simon's daughters.

CHAPTER LII.

THE INFLUENCE OF A CONFESSOR.

HARDLY had the orphans quitted Dagobert's wife when the poor woman, kneeling down, began to pray with fervor. Her tears, long restrained, now flowed abundantly; notwithstanding her sincere conviction that she had performed a religious duty in delivering up the girls, she waited with extreme fear her husband's return. Though blinded by her pious zeal she could not hide from herself that Dagobert would have good reason to be angry; and then this poor mother had also, under these untoward circumstances, to tell him of Agricola's arrest.

Every noise upon the stairs made Frances

start with trembling anxiety; after which she would resume her fervent prayers, supplicating strength to support this new and arduous trial. At length, she heard a step upon the landing-place below, and feeling sure this time that it was Dagobert, she hastily seated herself, dried her tears, and taking a sack of coarse cloth upon her lap, appeared to be occupied with sewing—though her aged hands trembled so much that she could hardly hold the needle.

After some minutes the door opened and Dagobert appeared. The soldier's rough countenance was stern and sad; as he entered, he flung his hat violently upon the table, so full of painful thought that he did not at first perceive the absence of the orphans.

"Poor girl!" cried he. "It is really terrible!"

"Didst see Mother Bunch? didst claim her?" said Frances, hastily, forgetting for a moment her own fears.

"Yes, I have seen her—but in what a state!—'twas enough to break one's heart. I claimed her, and pretty loud, too, I can tell you; but they said to me, that the commissary must first come to our place in order—" Here Dagobert paused, threw a glance of surprise round the room, and

exclaimed abruptly: "Where are the children?"

Frances felt herself seized with an icy shudder. "My dear," she began, in a feeble voice—but she was unable to continue.

"Where are Rose and Blanche! Answer me then! And Spoilsport, who is not here, either!"

"Do not be angry."

"Come," said Dagobert, abruptly, "I see you have let them go out with a neighbor — why not have accompanied them yourself, or let them wait for me, if they wished to take a walk; which is natural enough, this room being so dull. But I am astonished that they should have gone out, before they had news of good Mother Bunch—they have such kind hearts. But how pale you are!" added the soldier, looking nearer at Frances; "what is the matter, my poor wife? Are you ill?"

Dagobert took Frances' hand affectionately in his own; but the latter, painfully agitated by these words, pronounced with touching goodness, bowed her head, and wept as she kissed her husband's hand. The soldier, growing more and more uneasy, as he felt the scalding tears of his wife, exclaimed: "You weep, you do not

answer—tell me, then, the cause of your grief, poor wife! Is it because I spoke a little loud, in asking you how you could let the dear children go out with a neighbor? Remember their dying mother intrusted them to my care—'tis sacred, you see—and with them I am like an old hen after her chickens," added he, laughing to enliven Frances.

"Yes, you are right in loving them!"

"Come, then—be calm—you know me of old. With my great, hoarse voice I am not so bad a fellow at bottom. As you can trust to this neighbor, there is no great harm done; but in future, my good Frances, do not take any step with regard to the children without consulting me. They asked, I suppose, to go out for a little stroll with Spoilsport?"

"No, my dear—I—"

"No! Who is this neighbor to whom you have intrusted them? Where has she taken them? What time will she bring them back?"

"I do not know," murmured Frances, in a failing voice.

"You do not know!" cried Dagobert, with indignation; but restraining himself, he added, in a tone of friendly reproach: "You do not know? You cannot even fix

an hour, or, better still, not intrust them to any one? The children must have been very anxious to go out. They knew that I should return at any moment, so why not wait for me—eh, Frances? I ask you, why did they not wait for me? Answer me, will you! Zounds! you would make a saint swear!" cried Dagobert, stamping his foot; "answer me, I say!"

The courage of Frances was fast failing. These pressing and reiterated questions, which might end by the discovery of the truth, made her endure a thousand slow and poignant tortures. She preferred coming at once to the point, and determined to bear the full weight of her husband's anger, like a humble and resigned victim, obstinately faithful to the promise she had sworn to her confessor.

Not having the strength to rise, she bowed her head, allowed her arms to fall on either side of the chair, and said to her husband in a tone of the deepest despondency: "Do with me what you will—but do not ask me what is become of the children—I cannot answer you."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the feet of the soldier, he would not have been more violently, more deeply moved; he became

deadly pale; his bald forehead was covered with cold sweat; with fixed and staring look he remained for some moments motionless, mute, and petrified. Then, as if roused with a start from this momentary torpor, and filled with a terrific energy, he seized his wife by the shoulders, lifted her like a feather, placed her on her feet before him, and, leaning over her, exclaimed in a tone of mingled fury and despair: "The children!"

"Mercy! mercy!" gasped Frances, in a faint voice.

"Where are the children?" repeated Dagobert, as he shook with his powerful hands that poor frail body, and added in a voice of thunder: "Will you answer? the children!"

"Kill me, or forgive me, I cannot answer you," replied the unhappy woman, with that inflexible, yet mild obstinacy, peculiar to timid characters, when they act from convictions of doing right.

"Wretch!" cried the soldier; wild with rage, grief, despair, he lifted up his wife as if he would have dashed her upon the floor—but he was too brave a man to commit such cowardly cruelty, and, after that first burst of involuntary fury, he let her go.

Overpowered, Frances sunk upon her knees, clasped her hands, and, by the faint motion of her lips, it was clear that she was praying. Dagobert had then a moment of stunning giddiness; his thoughts wandered; what had just happened was so sudden, so incomprehensible, that it required some minutes to convince himself that his wife (that angel of goodness, whose life had been one course of heroic self-devotion, and who knew what the daughters of Marshal Simon were to him) should say to him: "Do not ask me about them—I cannot answer you."

The firmest, the strongest mind would have been shaken by this inexplicable fact. But, when the soldier had a little recovered himself, he began to look coolly at the circumstances, and reasoned thus sensibly with himself: "My wife alone can explain to me this inconceivable mystery—I do not mean either to beat or kill her—let us try every possible method, therefore, to induce her to speak, and above all, let me try to control myself."

He took a chair, handed another to his wife, who was still on her knees, and said to her: "Sit down." With an air of the utmost dejection, Frances obeyed.

"Listen to me, wife," resumed Dago-

bert, in a broken voice, interrupted by involuntary starts, which betrayed the boiling impatience he could hardly restrain. "Understand me—this cannot pass over in this manner—you know. I will never use violence toward you—just now, I gave way to a first moment of hastiness—I am sorry for it. Be sure, I shall not do so again; but, after all, I must know what has become of these children. Their mother intrusted them to my care, and I did not bring them all the way from Siberia for you to say to me: 'Do not ask me—I cannot tell you what I have done with them.' There is no reason in that. Suppose Marshal Simon were to arrive, and say to me, 'Dagobert, my children?' what answer am I to give him? See, I am calm—judge for yourself. I am calm—but just put yourself in my place, and tell me—what answer am I to give to the marshal? Well—what say you? Will you speak?"

"Alas! my dear—"

"It is of no use crying *alas!*" said the soldier, wiping his forehead, on which the veins were swollen as if they would burst; "what am I to answer to the marshal?"

"Accuse me to him—I will bear it all—I will say—"

"What will you say?"

"That, on going out, you intrusted the two girls to me, and that not finding them on your return, you asked me about them —and that my answer was, that I could not tell you what had become of them."

"And you think the marshal will be satisfied with such reasons?" cried Dagobert, clinching his fists convulsively upon his knees.

"Unfortunately, I can give no other—either to him or you—no—not if I were to die for it."

Dagobert bounded from his chair at this answer, which was given with hopeless resignation. His patience was exhausted; but determined not to yield to new bursts of anger, or to spend his breath in useless menaces, he abruptly opened one of the windows, and exposed his burning forehead to the cool air. A little calmer, he walked up and down for a few moments, and then returned to seat himself beside his wife. She, with her eyes bathed in tears, fixed her gaze upon the crucifix, thinking that she also had to bear a heavy cross.

Dagobert resumed: "By the manner in which you speak, I see that no accident has happened, which might endanger the health of the children."

No, oh, no! thank God, they are quite well—that is all I can say to you."

"Did they go out alone?"

"I cannot answer you."

"Has any one taken them away?"

"Alas, my dear! why ask me these questions? I cannot answer you."

"Will they come back here?"

"I do not know."

Dagobert started up; his patience was once more exhausted. But, after taking a few turns in the room, he again seated himself as before.

"After all," said he to his wife, "you have no interest to conceal from me what is become of the children. Why refuse to let me know?"

"I cannot do otherwise."

"I think you will change your opinion, when you know something that I am now forced to tell you. Listen to me well," added Dagobert, in an agitated voice: "If these children are not restored to me before the 13th of February—a day close at hand—I am in the position of a man that would rob the daughters of Marshal Simon—rob them, d'ye understand?" said the soldier, becoming more and more agitated. Then, with an accent of despair which pierced Frances' heart, he continued: "And yet I

have done all that an honest man could do for those poor children—you cannot tell what I have had to suffer on the road—my cares, my anxieties—I, a soldier, with the charge of two girls. It was only by strength of heart, by devotion, that I could go through with it—and when, for my reward, I hoped to be able to say to their father: 'Here are your children!'—" The soldier paused. To the violence of his first emotions had succeeded a mournful tenderness; he wept.

At sight of the tears rolling slowly down Dagobert's gray mustache, Frances felt for a moment her resolution give way; but, recalling the oath which she had made to her confessor, and reflecting that the eternal salvation of the orphans was at stake, she reproached herself inwardly with this evil temptation, which would no doubt be severely blamed by the Abbe Dubois. She answered, therefore, in a trembling voice: "How can they accuse you of robbing these children!"

"Know," resumed Dagobert, drawing his hand across his eyes, "that if these young girls have braved so many dangers, to come hither, all the way from Siberia, it is that great interests are concerned—perhaps an immense fortune—and that, if

they are not present on the 13th of February—here, in Paris, Rue Saint Francois—all will be lost—and through my fault—for I am responsible for your actions."

"The 13th of February? Rue Saint-Francois?" cried Frances, looking at her husband with surprise. "Like Gabriel!"

"What do you say about Gabriel?"

"When I took him in (poor deserted child!) he wore a bronze medal about his neck."

"A bronze medal!" cried the soldier, struck with amazement; "a bronze medal with these words, At Paris you will be, the 13th of February, 1832, Rue Saint-Francois'?"

"Yes—do you know?"

"Garbiel, too!" said the soldier, speaking to himself. Then he added hastily: "Does Gabriel know that this medal was found upon him?"

"I spoke to him of it at some time. He had also about him a portfolio filled with papers in a foreign tongue. I gave them to the Abbe Dubois, my confessor, to look over. He told me afterward that they were of little consequence; and, at a later period, when a charitable person, named M. Rodin, undertook the education of Gabriel, and to get him into the seminary, the

Abbe Dubois handed both papers and medal to him. Since then, I have heard nothing of them."

When Frances spoke of her confessor, a sudden light flashed across the mind of the soldier, though he was far from suspecting the machinations which had so long been at work with regard to Gabriel and the orphans. But he had a vague feeling that his wife was acting in obedience to some secret influence of the confessional—an influence of which he could not understand the aim or object, but which explained, in part at least, Frances' inconceivable obstinacy with regard to the disappearance of the orphans.

After a moment's reflection, he rose, and said sternly to his wife, looking fixedly at her: "There is a priest at the bottom of all this."

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"You have no interest to conceal these children. You are one of the best of women. You see that I suffer; if you only were concerned, you would have pity upon me."

"My dear—"

"I tell you, all this smacks of the confessional," resumed Dagobert. "You would sacrifice me and these children to

your confessor; but take care—I shall find out where he lives—and a thousand thunders! I will go and ask him who is master in my house, he or I—and if he does not answer," added the soldier, with a threatening expression of countenance, "I shall know how to make him speak."

"Gracious heaven!" cried Frances, clasping her hands in horror at these sacrilegious words; "remember he is a priest!"

"A priest, who causes discord, treachery, and misfortune in my house, is as much of a wretch as any other whom I have a right to call to account for the evil he does to me and mine. Therefore, tell me immediately where are the children—or else, I give you fair warning, I will go and demand them of the confessor. Some crime is here hatching of which you are an accomplice without knowing it, unhappy woman! Well, I prefer having to do with another than you."

"My dear," said Frances, in a mild, firm voice, "you cannot think to impose by violence on a venerable man, who for twenty years has had the care of my soul. His age alone should be respected."

"No age shall prevent me?"

"Heavens! where are you going? You alarm me?"

"I am going to your church. They must know you there—I will ask for your confessor—and we shall see!"

"I entreat you, my dear," cried Frances, throwing herself in a fright before Dagobert, who was hastening toward the door; "only think to what you will expose yourself! Heavens! insult a priest? Why, it is one of the reserved cases!"

These last words, which appeared most alarming to the simplicity of Dagobert's wife, did not make any impression upon the soldier. He disengaged himself from her grasp, and was going to rush out bareheaded, so high was his exasperation, when the door opened, and the commissary of police entered, followed by Mother Bunch and a policeman, carrying the bundle which he had taken from the young girl.

"The commissary!" cried Dagobert, who recognized him by his official scarf. "Ah! so much the better—he could not have come at a fitter moment."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE EXAMINATION.

"MISTRESS FRANCES BAUDOIN?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes, sir—it is I," said Frances. Then, perceiving the pale and trembling sewing girl, who did not dare to come forward, she stretched out her arms to her. "Oh, my poor child!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears; "forgive—forgive us—since it is for our sake you have suffered this humiliation!"

When Dagobert's wife had tenderly embraced the young seamstress, the latter, turning toward the commissary, said to him with an expression of sad and touching dignity: "You see, sir, that I am not a thief."

"Madame," said the magistrate, addressing Frances, "am I to understand that the silver mug, the shawl, the sheets contained in this bundle—"

"Belong to me, sir. It was to render me a service that this dear girl, who is the best and most honest creature in the world, undertook to carry these articles to the pawnbroker's."

"Sir," said the magistrate sternly to the policeman, "you have committed a deplorable error. I shall take care to report you, and see that you are punished. You may go, sir." Then, addressing Mother Bunch, with an air of real regret, he added: "I can only express my sorrow for what has happened. Believe me, I deeply feel for the cruel position in which you have been placed."

"I believe it, sir," said Mother Bunch, "and I thank you." Overcome by so many emotions, she sunk upon a chair.

The magistrate was about to retire, when Dagobert, who had been seriously reflecting for some minutes, said to him in a firm voice: "Please to hear me, sir; I have a deposition to make."

"Speak, sir."

"What I am about to say is very important; it is to you, in your quality of a magistrate, that I make this declaration."

"And as a magistrate I will hear you, sir."

"I arrived here two days ago, bringing with me from Russia two girls who had been intrusted to me by their mother—the wife of Marshal Simon."

"Of Marshal Simon, Duke de Ligny?" said the commissary, very much surprised.

"Yes, sir. Well, I left them here, being obliged to go out on pressing business. This morning, during my absence, they disappeared—and I am certain I know the man who has been the cause of it."

"Now, my dear," said Frances, much alarmed.

"Sir," said the magistrate, "your declaration is a very serious one. Disappearance of persons—sequestration, perhaps. But are you quite sure?"

"These young ladies were here an hour ago; I repeat, sir, that, during my absence, they have been taken away."

"I do not doubt the sincerity of your declaration, sir; but still it is difficult to explain so strange an abduction. Who tells you that these young girls will not return? Besides, whom do you suspect? One word, before you make your accusation. Remember, it is the magistrate who hears you. On leaving this place, the law will take its course in this affair."

"That is what I wish, sir; I am responsible for those young ladies to their father. He may arrive at any moment, and I must be prepared to justify myself."

"I understand all these reasons, sir; but still have a care you are not deceived by unfounded suspicions. Your denuncia-

tion once made, I may have to act provisionally against the person accused. Now, if you should be under a mistake, the consequences would be very serious for you; and, without going further," said the magistrate, pointing to Mother Bunch, with emotion, "you see what are the results of a false accusation."

"You hear, my dear," cried Frances, terrified at the resolution of Dagobert to accuse the Abbe Dubois; "do not say a word more, I entreat you."

But the more the soldier reflected, the more he felt convinced that nothing but the influence of her confessor could have induced Frances to act as she had done; so he resumed, with assurance: "I accuse my wife's confessor of being the principal or an accomplice in the abduction of Marshal Simon's daughters."

Frances uttered a deep groan, and hid her face in her hands, while Mother Bunch, who had drawn nigh, endeavored to console her. The magistrate had listened to Dagobert with extreme astonishment, and he now said to him with some severity: "Pray, sir, do not accuse unjustly a man whose position is in the highest degree respectable—a priest, sir?—yes, a priest? I warned you beforehand to reflect upon

what you advanced. All this becomes very serious; and, at your age, any levity in such matters would be unpardonable."

"Bless me, sir!" said Dagobert, with impatience; "at my age one has common sense. These are the facts. My wife is one of the best and most honorable of human creatures—ask any one in the neighborhood, and they will tell you so—but she is a devotee; and, for twenty years, she has always seen with her confessor's eyes. She adores her son, she loves me also; but she puts the confessor before us both."

"Sir," said the commissary, "these family details—"

"Are indispensable, as you shall see. I go out an hour ago, to look after this poor girl here. When I come back, the young ladies have disappeared. I ask my wife to whom she has intrusted them, and where they are; she falls at my feet weeping, and says: 'Do what you will with me, but do not ask me what is become of the children. I cannot answer you.'"

"Is this true, madame!" cried the commissary, looking at Frances with surprise.

"Anger, threats, entreaties, had no effect," resumed Dagobert; "to everything she answered as mildly as a saint:

'I can tell you nothing!' Now, sir, I maintain that my wife has no interest to take away these children; she is under the absolute dominion of her confessor; she has acted by his orders and for his purposes; he is the guilty party."

While Dagobert spoke, the commissary looked more and more attentively at Frances, who, supported by the hunchback, continued to weep bitterly. After a moment's reflection the magistrate advanced toward Dagobert's wife, and said to her: "Madame, you have heard what your husband has just declared?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you to say in your justification?"

"But, sir," cried Dagobert, "it is not my wife that I accuse—I do not mean that: it is her confessor."

"Sir, you have applied to a magistrate; and the magistrate must act as he thinks best for the discovery of the truth. Once more, madame," he resumed, addressing Frances, "what have you to say in your justification?"

"Alas! nothing, sir."

"Is it true that your husband left these young girls in your charge when he went out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it true that, on his return, they were no longer to be found?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it true that, when he asked you where they were, you told him that you could give him no information on the subject?"

The commissary appeared to wait for Frances' reply with a kind of anxious curiosity.

"Yes, sir," said she, with the utmost simplicity, "that was the answer I made my husband."

"What, madame!" said the magistrate, with an air of painful astonishment; "that was your only answer to all the prayers and commands of your husband? What! you refused to give him the least information? It is neither probable nor possible."

"It is the truth, sir."

"Well, but, after all, madame, what have you done with the young ladies that were intrusted to your care?"

"I can tell you nothing about it, sir. If I would not answer my poor husband, I certainly will not answer any one else."

"Well, sir," resumed Dagobert, "was I wrong? An honest, excellent woman like that, who is full of good sense and affec-

tion, to talk in this way—is it natural? I repeat to you, sir, that it is the work of her confessor; act against him promptly and decidedly, we shall soon know all, and my poor children will be restored to me."

"Madame," continued the commissary, without being able to repress a certain degree of emotion, "I am about to speak to you very severely. My duty obliges me to do so. This affair becomes so serious and complicated that I must instantly commence judicial proceedings on the subject. You acknowledge that these young ladies have been left in your charge, and that you cannot produce them. Now, listen to me; if you refuse to give any explanation in the matter, it is you alone that will be accused of their disappearance. I shall be obliged, though with great regret, to take you into custody."

"Me!" cried Frances, with the utmost alarm.

"Her!" exclaimed Dagobert; "never! It is her confessor that I accuse, not my poor wife. Take her into custody, indeed!" he ran toward her, as if he would protect her.

"It is too late, sir," said the commissary. "You have made your charge for

the abduction of these two young ladies. According to your wife's own declaration, she alone is compromised up to this point. I must take her before the Public Prosecutor, who will decide what course to pursue."

"And I say, sir," cried Dagobert, in a menacing tone, "that my wife shall not stir from this room."

"Sir," said the commissary, coolly, "I can appreciate your feelings; but, in the interest of justice, I would beg you not to oppose a necessary measure—a measure, which, moreover, in ten minutes it would be quite impossible for you to prevent."

These words, spoken with calmness, recalled the soldier to himself. "But, sir," said he, "I do not accuse my wife."

"Never mind, my dear—do not think of me!" said Frances, with the angelic resignation of a martyr. "The Lord is still pleased to try me sorely; but I am His unworthy servant, and must gratefully resign myself to His will. Let them arrest me, if they choose; I will say no more in prison than I have said already on the subject of those poor children."

"But, sir," cried Dagobert, "you see that my wife is out of her head. You cannot arrest her."

"There is no charge, proof, or indication against the other person whom you accuse, and whose character should be his protection. If I take your wife, she may perhaps be restored to you after a preliminary examination. I regret," added the commissary, in a tone of pity, "to have to execute such a mission, at the very moment when your son's arrest—"

"What!" cried Dagobert, looking with speechless astonishment at his wife and Mother Bunch; "what does he say? my son?"

"You were not then aware of it? Oh, sir! a thousand pardons!" said the magistrate, with painful emotion. "It is distressing to make you such a communication."

"My son!" repeated Dagobert, pressing his two hands to his forehead. "My son! arrested!"

"For a political offense of no great moment," said the commissary.

"Oh! this is too much. All comes on me at once!" cried the soldier, falling overpowered into a chair, and hiding his face with his hands.

. . . . . .

After a touching farewell, during which, in spite of her terror, Frances remained

faithful to the vow she had made to the Abbe Dubois—Dagobert, who had refused to give evidence against his wife, was left leaning upon a table exhausted by contending emotions, and could not help exclaiming: "Yesterday, I had with me my wife, my son, my two poor orphans—and now—I am alone—alone!"

The moment he pronounced these words, in a despairing tone, a mild, sad voice was heard close behind him, saying timidly: "M. Dagobert, I am here; if you will allow me, I will remain and wait upon you."

It was Mother Bunch!

Trusting that the reader's sympathy is with the old soldier thus left desolate, with Agricola in his prison, Adrienne in hers, the mad-house, and Rose and Blanche Simon in theirs, the nunnery; we hasten to assure him (or her, as the case may be) that not only will their future steps be traced, but the dark machinations of the Jesuits, and the thrilling scenes in which new characters will perform their varied parts, pervaded by the watching spirit of the Wandering Jew, will be revealed in Part Second of this work, entitled: THE CHASTISEMENT.

PART SECOND.

THE CHASTISEMENT.

PROLOGUE.

THE BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF TWO WORLDS.

As the eagle perched upon the cliff commands an all comprehensive view—not only of what happens on the plains and in the woodlands, but of matters occurring upon the heights, which its eyrie overlooks, so may the reader have sights pointed out to him which lie below the level of the unassisted eye.

In the year 1831, the powerful Order of the Jesuits saw fit to begin to act upon information which had for some time been digesting in their hands.

As it related to a sum estimated at no less than thirty or forty millions of francs, it is no wonder that they should redouble all exertions to obtain it from the rightful owners.

These were, presumably, the descendants of Marius, Count of Rennepont, in the reign of Louis XIV. of France.

They were distinguished from other men by a simple token, which all, in the year above named, had in their hands.

It was a bronze medal, bearing these legends on reverse and obverse:

VICTIM of L. C. D. J. Pray for me! ——— PARIS, February the 13th, 1682.	IN PARIS, Rue Saint François No. 3, In a century and a half you will be. February the 13th, 1832. ——— PRAY FOR ME!

Those who had this token were descendants of a family whom, a hundred and fifty years ago, persecution scattered through the world, in emigration and exile; in changes of religion, fortune and name. For this family—what grandeur, what reverses, what obscurity, what luster, what penury, what glory! How many crimes sullied, how many virtues honored it! The history of this single family is the history of humanity! Passing through many generations, throbbing in the veins of the poor and the rich, the sovereign and the bandit, the wise and the simple, the coward and the brave, the saint

and the atheist, the blood flowed on to the year we have named.

Seven representatives summed up the virtue, courage, degradation, splendor, and poverty of the race. Seven: two orphan twin daughters of exiled parents, a dethroned prince, a humble missionary priest, a man of the middle class, a young lady of high name and large fortune, and a workingman.

Fate scattered them in Russia, India, France, and America.

The orphans, Rose and Blanche Simon, had left their dead mother's grave in Siberia, under charge of a trooper, named Francis Baudoin, *alias* Dagobert, who was as much attached to them as he had been devoted to their father, his commanding general.

On the road to France, this little party had met the first check in the only tavern of Mockern village. Not only had a wild beast showman, known as Morok the lion-tamer, sought to pick a quarrel with the inoffensive veteran, but, that failing, had let a panther of his menagerie loose upon the soldier's horse. That horse had carried Dagobert, under General Simon's and the Great Napoleon's eyes, through many battles; had borne the general's wife (a

Polish lady under the Czar's ban) to her home of exile in Siberia, and their children now across Russia and Germany, but only to perish thus cruelly. An unseen hand appeared in a manifestation of spite otherwise unaccountable. Dagobert, denounced as a French spy, and his fair young companions accused of being adventuresses to help his designs, had so kindled at the insult, not less to him than to his old commander's daughters, that he had taught the pompous burgomaster of Mockern a lesson, which, however, resulted in the imprisonment of the three in Leipsic jail.

General Simon, who had vainly sought to share his master's St. Helena captivity, had gone to fight the English in India. But notwithstanding his drilling of Kadjasing's sepoys, they had been beaten by the troops taught by Clive, and not only was the old king of Mundi slain, and the realm added to the company's lands, but his son, Prince Djalma, taken prisoner. However, at length released, he had gone to Batavia, with General Simon. The prince's mother was a Frenchwoman, and among the property she left him in the capital of Java, the general was delighted to find just such another medal as he knew was in his wife's possession.

The unseen hand of enmity had reached to him, for letters miscarried, and he did not know either of his wife's decease or that he had twin daughters.

By a trick, on the eve of the steamship leaving Batavia for the Isthmus of Suez, Djalma was separated from his friend, and sailing for Europe alone, the latter had to follow in another vessel.

The missionary priest trod the war trails of the wilderness, with that faith and fearlessness which true soldiers of the Cross should evince. In one of these heroic undertakings, Indians had captured him, and dragging him to their village under the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, they had nailed him in derision to a cross and prepared to scalp him.

But if an unseen hand of a foe smote or stabbed at the sons of Rennepont, a visible interpositor had often shielded them, in various parts of the globe.

A man, seeming of thirty years of age, very tall, with a countenance as lofty as mournful, marked by the black eyebrows meeting, had thrown himself—during a battle's height—between a gun of a park, which General Simon was charging, and that officer. The canon vomited its hail of death, but when the flame and smoke had

passed the tall man stood erect as before, smiling pityingly on the gunner, who fell on his knees as frightened as if he beheld Satan himself. Again, as General Simon lay upon the lost field of Waterloo, raging with his wounds, eager to die after such a defeat, this same man stanched his hurts, and bade him live for his wife's sake.

Years after, wearing the same unalterable look, this man accosted Dagobert in Siberia, and gave him for General Simon's wife the diary and letters of her husband, written in India, in little hope of them ever reaching her hands. And at the year our story opens, this man unbarred the cell door of Leipsic jail and let Dagobert and the orphans out, free to continue their way into France.

On the other hand, when the scalping-knife had traced its marks around the head of Gabriel the missionary, and when only a dexterous turn and tug would have removed the trophy, a sudden apparition had terrified the superstitious savages. It was a woman of thirty, whose brown tresses formed a rich frame around a royal face, toned down by endless sorrowing. The redskins shrunk from her steady advance, and when her hand was stretched out between them and their young victim, they

uttered a howl of alarm, and fled as if a host of their foemen were on their track. Gabriel was saved, but all his life he was doomed to bear that halo of martyrdom, the circling sweep of the scalper's knife.

He was a Jesuit. By the orders of his Society he embarked for Europe. We should say here that he, though owning a medal of the seven described, was unaware that he should have worn it. His vessel was driven by storms to refit at the Azores, where he had changed ship into the same as was bearing Prince Djalma to France, via Portsmouth.

But the gales followed him, and sated their fury by wrecking the "Black Eagle" on the Picardy coast. This was at the same point as where a disabled Hamburg steamer, among whose passengers were Dagobert and his two charges, was destroyed the same night. Happily the tempest did not annihilate them all. There were saved, Prince Djalma and a countryman of his, one Faringhea, a Thuggee chief, hunted out of British India; Dagobert, and Rose and Blanche Simon, whom Gabriel had rescued. These survivors had recovered, thanks to the care they had received in Cardoville House, a country mansion which had sheltered them; and

except the prince and the Strangler chief, the others were speedily able to go on to Paris.

The old grenadier and the orphans—until General Simon should be heard from—dwelt in the former's house. His son had kept it, from his mother's love for the life-long home. It was such a mean habitation as a workman like Agricola Baudoin could afford to pay the rent of, and far from the fit abode of the daughters of the Duke de Ligny and Marshal of France, which Napoleon had created General Simon, though the rank had only recently been approved by the Restoration.

But in Paris the unknown hostile hand showed itself more malignant than ever.

The young lady of high name and large fortune was Adrienne de Cardoville, whose aunt, the Princess de Saint-Dizier, was a Jesuit. Through her and her accomplices' machinations, the young lady's forward yet virtuous, wildly aspiring but sensible, romantic but just, character was twisted into a plausible reason for her immurement in a madhouse.

This asylum adjourned St. Mary's Convent, into which Rose and Blanche Simon were deceitfully conducted. To secure their removal, Dagobert had been decoyed

into the country, under pretense of showing some of General Simon's documents to a lawyer; his son Agricola arrested for treason, on account of some idle verses the blacksmith poet was guilty of; and his wife rendered powerless, or, rather, a passive assistant, by the influence of the confessional! When Dagobert hurried back from his wild-goose chase, he found the orphans gone: Mother Bunch (a fellow-tenant of the house, who had been brought up in the family) ignorant, and his wife stubbornly refusing to break the promise she had given her confessor, and acquaint a single soul where she had permitted the girls to be taken. In his rage, the soldier rashly accused that confessor, but instead of arresting the Abbe Dubois, it was Mrs. Baudoin whom the magistrate felt compelled to arrest, as the person whom alone he ventured to commit for examination in regard to the orphans' disappearance. Thus triumphs, for the time being, the unseen foe.

The orphans in a nunnery; the dethroned prince a poor castaway in a foreign land; the noble young lady in a madhouse; the missionary priest under the thumb of his superiors.

As for the man of the middle class, and

the working man, who conclude the list of this famliy, we are to read of them, as well as of the others, in the pages which now succeed these.

CHAPTER I.

THE MASQUERADE.

THE following day to that on which Dagobert's wife (arrested for not accounting for the disappearance of General Simon's daughters) was led away before a magistrate, a noisy and animated scene was transpiring on the Place du Châtelet, in front of a building whose first floor and basement were used as the tap-rooms of the "Sucking Calf" public-house.

A carnival night was dying out.

Quite a number of maskers, grotesquely and shabbily bedecked, had rushed out of the low dance-houses in the Guildhall Ward and were roaring out staves of songs as they crossed the square. But on catching sight of a second troop of mummers running about the waterside, the first party stopped to wait for the others to come up, rejoicing, with many a shout, in hopes of one of those verbal battles of slang and

smutty talk which made Vade so illustrious.

This mob—nearly all its members half-seas over, soon swollen by the many people who have to be up early to follow their crafts—suddenly concentrated in one of the corners of the square so that a pale, deformed girl, who was going that way, was caught in the human tide. This was Mother Bunch. Up with the lark, she was hurrying to receive some work from her employer. Remembering how a mob had treated her when she had been arrested in the streets only the day before, by mistake, the poor work-girl's fears may be imagined when she was now surrounded by the revelers against her will. But, spite of all her efforts—very feeble, alas!—she could not stir a step, for the band of merry-makers, newly arriving, had rushed in among the others, shoving some of them aside, pushing far into the mass, and sweeping Mother Bunch — who was in their way—clear over to the crowd around the public-house.

The newcomers were much finer rigged out than the others, for they belonged to the gay, turbulent class which goes frequently to the Chaumière, the Prado, the Colisee, and other more or less rowdyish

haunts of waltzers, made up generally of students, shop-girls, and counter-skippers, clerks, unfortunates, etc., etc.

This set, while retorting to the chaff of the other party, seemed to be very impatiently expecting some singularly desired person to put in her appearance.

The following snatches of conversation, passing between clowns and columbines, pantaloons and fairies, Turks and sultans, debardeurs and debardeuses, paired off more or less properly, will give an idea of the importance of the wished-for personage.

"They ordered the spread to be for seven in the morning, so their carriages ought to have come up afore now."

"Werry like, but the Bacchanal Queen has got to lead off the last dance in the Prado."

"I wish to thunder I'd 'a known that, and I'd 'a stayed there to see her, my beloved queen!"

"Gobinet! if you call her your beloved queen again I'll scratch you! Here's a pinch for you, anyhow!"

"Ow, wow, Celeste! hands off! You are black-spotting the beautiful white satin jacket my mamma gave me when I first came out as Don *Passqually!*

"Why do you call the Bacchanal Queen your beloved, then? What am I, I'd like to know?"

"You are my beloved, but not my queen, for there is only one moon in the nights of Nature, and only one Bacchanal Queen in the night at the Prado."

"That's a bit from a valentine! You can't come over me with such rubbish."

"Gobinet's right! the queen was an out-and-outer to-night!"

"In prime feather!"

"I never saw her more on the go!"

"And, my eyes! wasn't her dress stunning?"

"Took your breath away!"

"Crushing!"

"Heavy!"

"Immense!"

"The last kick!"

"No one but she can get up such dresses."

"And, then, the dance!"

"Oh, yes! it was at once bounding, waving, twisting! There is not such another bayadere under the night-cap of the sky!"

"Gobinet, give me back my shawl directly. You have already spoiled it by rolling it round your great body. I don't

choose to have my things ruined for hulking beasts who call other women bayaderes!"

"Celeste, simmer down. I am disguised as a Turk, and, when I talk of bayaderes, I am only in character."

"Your Celeste is like them all, Gobinet; she's jealous of the Bacchanal Queen."

"Jealous!—do you think me jealous? Well, now! that's too bad. If I chose to be as showy as she is they would talk of me as much. After all, it's only a nickname that makes her reputation! *nickname!*"

"In that you have nothing to envy her—since you are called Celeste!"

"You know well enough, Gobinet, that Celeste is my *real* name."

"Yes; but it's fancied a nickname—when one looks in your face."

"Gobinet, I will put that down to your account."

"And Oscar will help you to add it up, eh?"

"Yes; and you shall see the total. When I carry one, the remainder will not be you."

"Celeste, you make me cry! I only meant to say that your celestial name does not go well with your charming little face,

which is still more mischievous than that of the Bacchanal Queen."

"That's right; wheedle me now, wretch!"

"I swear by the accursed head of my landlord, that, if you liked, you could spread yourself as much as the Bacchanal Queen—which is saying a great deal."

"The fact is, that the Bacchanal has cheek enough, in all conscience."

"Not to speak of her fascinating the bobbies!"

"And magnetizing the beaks."

"They may get as angry as they please; she always finishes by making them laugh."

"And they all call her: Queen!"

"Last night, she charmed a slop (as modest as a country girl) whose purity took up arms against the famous dance of the Stormblown Tulip."

"What a quadrille! Sleepinbuff and the Bacchanal Queen, having opposite to them Rose-Pompon and Ninny Moulin!"

"And all four making tulips as full-blown as could be!"

"By the bye, is it true what they say of Ninny Moulin?"

"What?"

"Why that he is a writer, and scribbles pamphlets on religion."

"Yes, it is true. I have often seen him at my employer's, with whom he deals; a bad paymaster, but a jolly fellow!"

"And pretends to be devout, eh?"

"I believe you, my boy—when it is necessary; then he is my Lord Dumoulin, as large as life. He rolls his eyes, walks with his head on one side, and his toes turned in; but, when the piece is played out, he slips away to the balls of which he is so fond. The girls christened him Ninny Moulin. Add, that he drinks like a fish, and you have the photo of the cove. All this doesn't prevent his writing for the religious newspapers; and the saints, whom he lets in even oftener than himself, are ready to swear by him. You should see his articles and his tracts—only see, not read!—every page is full of the devil and his horns, and the desperate fryings which await your impious revolutionists—and then the authority of the bishops, the power of the Pope—hang it! how could I know it all? This toper, Ninny Moulin, gives good measure enough for their money!"

"The fact is, that he is both a heavy drinker and a heavy swell. How he rattled on with little Rose-Pompon in the dance of the Full-blown Tulip!"

"And what a rum chap he looked in his Roman helmet and top-boots."

"Rose-Pompon dances divinely, too; she has the poetic twist."

"And don't show her heels a bit!"

"Yes; but the Bacchanal Queen is six thousand feet above the level of any common leg-shaker. I always come back to her step last night in the Full-blown Tulip."

"It was huge!"

"It was serene!"

"If I were father of a family, I would intrust her with the education of my sons!"

"It was that step, however, which offended the bobby's modesty."

"The fact is, it was a little free."

"Free as air—so the policeman comes up to her, and says: "Well, my queen, is your foot to keep on a-goin' up forever?"

"'No, modest warrior!' replies the queen; 'I practice the step only once every evening, to be able to dance it when I am old. I made a vow of it, that you might become an inspector.'"

"What a comic card!"

"I don't believe she will remain always with Sleepinbuff."

"Because he has been a workman?"

"What nonsense! it would preciously become us, students and shopboys, to give ourselves airs! No; but I am astonished at the queen's fidelity."

"Yes—they've been a team three or four good months."

"She's wild upon him, and he on her."

"They must lead a gay life."

"Sometimes I ask myself where the devil Sleepinbuff gets all the money he spends. It appears that he pays all last night's expenses, three coaches-and-four, and a breakfast this morning for twenty, at ten francs a head."

"They say he has come into some property. That's why Ninny Moulin, who has a good nose for eating and drinking, made acquaintance with him last night—leaving out of the question that he may have some designs on the Bacchanal Queen."

"He! In a lot! He's rather too ugly. The girls like to dance with him because he makes people laugh—but that's all. Little Rose-Pompon, who is such a pretty creature, has taken him as a harmless *chap-her-own*, in the absence of her student."

"The coaches! the coaches!" exclaimed the crowd, all with one voice.

Forced to stop in the midst of the maskers, Mother Bunch had not lost a word of this conversation, which was deeply painful to her, as it concerned her sister, whom she had not seen for a long time. Not that the Bacchanal Queen had a bad heart; but the sight of the wretched poverty of Mother Bunch—a poverty which she had herself shared, but which she had not had strength of mind to bear any longer—caused such bitter grief to the gay, thoughtless girl, that she would no more expose herself to it, after she had in vain tried to induce her sister to accept assistance, which the latter always refused, knowing that its source could not be honorable.

"The coaches! the coaches!" once more exclaimed the crowd, as they pressed forward with enthusiasm, so that Mother Bunch, carried on against her will, was thrust into the foremost rank of the people assembled to see the show.

It was, indeed, a curious sight. A man on horseback, disguised as a postilion, his blue jacket embroidered with silver, an enormous tail from which the powder escaped in puffs, and a hat adorned with long ribbons, preceded the first carriage, cracking his whip, and crying with all his might: "Make way for the Bacchanal Queen and her court!"

In an open carriage, drawn by four lean horses, on which rode two old postilions dressed as devils, was raised a downright pyramid of men and women, sitting, standing, leaning, in every possible variety of odd, extravagant, and grotesque costume; altogether an indescribable mass of bright colors, flowers, ribbons, tinsel, and spangles. Amid this heap of strange forms and dresses appeared wild or graceful countenances, ugly or handsome features —but all animated by the feverish excitement of a jovial frenzy—all turned with an expression of fanatical admiration toward the second carriage, in which the queen was enthroned, while they united with the multitude in reiterated shouts of "Long live the Bacchanal Queen."

This second carriage, open like the first, contained only the four dancers of the famous step of the Storm-blown Tulip—Ninny Moulin, Rose-Pompon, Sleepinbuff, and the Bacchanal Queen.

Dumoulin, the religious writer, who wished to dispute possession of Mmè. de la Sainte-Colombe with his patron, M. Rodin —Dumoulin, surnamed Ninny Moulin, standing on the front cushions, would have presented a magnificent study for Callot or Gavarni, that eminent artist,

who unites with the biting strength and marvelous fancy of an illustrious caricaturist, the grace, the poetry, and the depth of Hogarth.

Ninny Moulin, who was about thirty-five years of age, wore very much back upon his head a Roman helmet of silver paper. A voluminous plume of black feathers, rising from a red wood holder, was stuck on one side of this head-gear, breaking the too classic regularity of its outline. Beneath this casque shone forth the most rubicund and jovial face, that ever was purpled by the fumes of generous wine. A prominent nose, with its primitive shape modestly concealed beneath a luxuriant growth of pimples, half red, half violet, gave a funny expression to a perfectly beardless face; while a large mouth, with thick lips turning their insides outward, added to the air of mirth and jollity which beamed from his large gray eyes, set flat in his head.

On seeing this joyous fellow, with a paunch like Silenus, one could not help asking how it was that he had not drowned in wine, a hundred times over, the gall, bile, and venom which flowed from his pamphlets against the enemies of Ultramontanism, and how his Catholic beliefs

could float upward in the midst of these mad excesses of drink and dancing. The question would have appeared insoluble, if one had not remembered how many actors, who play the blackest and most hateful of first robbers on the stage, are, when off it, the best fellows in the world.

The weather being cold, Ninny Moulin wore a kind of box-coat, which, being half-open, displayed his cuirass of scales, and his flesh-colored pantaloons, finishing just below the calf in a pair of yellow tops to his boots. Leaning forward in front of the carriage, he uttered wild shouts of delight, mingled with the words: "Long live the Bacchanal Queen!"—after which he shook and whirled the enormous rattle he held in his hand. Standing beside him, Sleepinbuff waved on high a banner of white silk, on which were the words: "Love and joy to the Bacchanal Queen!"

Sleepinbuff was about twenty-five years of age. His countenance was gay and intelligent, surrounded by a collar of chestnut-colored whiskers; but, worn with late hours and excesses, it expressed a singular mixture of carelessness and hardihood, recklessness and mockery; still, no base or wicked passion had yet stamped there its fatal impress. He was the perfect type

of the *Parisian*, as the term is generally applied, whether in the army, in the provinces, on board a king's ship, or a merchantman. It is not a compliment, and yet it is far from being an insult; it is an epithet which partakes at once of blame, admiration, and fear; for if, in this sense, the *Parisian* is often idle and rebellious, he is also quick at his work, resolute in danger, and always terribly satirical and fond of practical jokes.

He was dressed in a very flashy style. He wore a black velvet jacket with silver buttons, a scarlet waistcoat, trousers with broad blue stripes, a Cashmere shawl for a girdle with ends loosely floating, and a chimney-pot hat covered with flowers and streamers. This disguise set off his light, easy figure to great advantage.

At the back of the carriage, standing up on the cushions, were Rose-Pompon and the Bacchanal Queen.

Rose-Pompon, formerly a fringe-maker, was about seventeen years old, and had the prettiest and most winning little face imaginable. She was gayly dressed in debardeur costume. Her powdered wig, over which was smartly cocked on one side an orange and green cap, laced with silver, increased the effect of her bright black

eyes, and of her round, carnation cheeks. She wore about her neck an orange-colored cravat, of the same material as her loose sash. Her tight jacket and narrow vest of light green velvet, with silver ornaments, displayed to the best advantage a charming figure, the pliancy of which must have well suited the evolutions of the Storm-blown Tulip. Her large trousers, of the same stuff and color as the jacket, were not calculated to hide any of her attractions.

The Bacchanal Queen, being at the least a head taller, leaned with one hand on the shoulder of Rose-Pompon. Mother Bunch's sister ruled, like a true monarch, over this mad revelry, which her very presence seemed to inspire, such influence had her own mirth and animation over all that surrounded her.

She was a tall girl of about twenty years of age, light and graceful, with regular features, and a merry-racketing air. Like her sister, she had magnificent chestnut hair, and large blue eyes; but instead of being soft and timid, like those of the young seamstress, the latter shone with indefatigable ardor in the pursuit of pleasure. Such was the energy of her vivacious constitution, that, notwithstanding

many nights and days passed in one continued revel, her complexion was as pure, her cheeks as rosy, her neck as fresh and fair, as if she had that morning issued from some peaceful home. Her costume, though singular and fantastic, suited her admirably. It was composed of a tight, long-waisted bodice in cloth of gold, trimmed with great bunches of scarlet ribbon, the ends of which streamed over her naked arms, and a short petticoat of scarlet velvet, ornamented with golden beads and spangles. This petticoat reached half-way down a leg at once trim and strong, in a white silk stocking, and red buskin with brass heel.

Never had any Spanish dancer a more supple, elastic, and tempting form, than this singular girl, who seemed possessed with the spirit of dancing and perpetual motion, for, almost every moment, slight undulations of head, hips, and shoulders seemed to follow the music of an invisible orchestra; while the tip of her right foot, placed on the carriage door in the most alluring manner, continued to beat time—for the Bacchanal Queen stood proudly erect upon the cushions.

A sort of gilt diadem, the emblem of her noisy sovereignty, hung with little bells,

adorned her forehead. Her long hair, in two thick braids, was drawn back from her rosy cheeks and twisted behind her head. Her left hand rested on little Rose-Pompon's shoulder, and in her right she held an enormous nosegay, which she waved to the crowd, accompanying each salute with bursts of laughter.

It would be difficult to give a complete idea of this noisily animated and fantastic scene, which included a third carriage, filled, like the first, with a pyramid of grotesque and extravagant masks. Among the delighted crowd, one person alone contemplated the picture with deep sorrow. It was Mother Bunch, who was still kept, in spite of herself, in the first rank of spectators.

Separated from her sister for a long time, she now beheld her in all the pomp of her singular triumph, in the midst of the cries of joy, and the applause of her companions in pleasure. Yet the eyes of the young seamstress grew dim with tears; for, though the Bacchanal Queen seemed to share in the stunning gayety of all around her—though her face was radiant with smiles, and she appeared fully to enjoy the splendors of her temporary elevation —yet she had the sincere pity of the poor

workwoman, almost in rags, who was seeking, with the first dawn of morning, the means of earning her daily bread.

Mother Bunch had forgotten the crowd to look only at her sister, whom she tenderly loved—only the more tenderly that she thought her situation to be pitied. With her eyes fixed on the joyous and beautiful girl, her pale and gentle countenance expressed the most touching and painful interest.

All at once, as the brilliant glance of the Bacchanal Queen traveled along the crowd, it lighted on the sad features of Mother Bunch.

"My sister!" exclaimed Cephyse—such was the name of the Bacchanal Queen—"My sister!"—and with one bound, light as a ballet-dancer, she sprung from her movable throne (which fortunately just happened to be stopping), and, rushing up to the hunchback, embraced her affectionately.

All this had passed so rapidly that the companions of the Bacchanal Queen, still stupefied by the boldness of her perilous leap, knew not how to account for it; while the masks who surrounded Mother Bunch drew back in surprise, and the latter, absorbed in the delight of embracing her sis-

ter, whose caresses she returned, did not even think of the singular contrast between them, which was sure to soon excite the astonishment and hilarity of the crowd.

Cephyse was the first to think of this, and wishing to save her sister at least one humiliation, she turned toward the carriage, and said: "Rose-Pompon, throw me down my cloak; and, Ninny Moulin, open the door directly!"

Having received the cloak, the Bacchanal Queen hastily wrapped it round her sister, before the latter could speak or move. Then, taking her by the hand, she said to her: "Come! come!"

"I!" cried Mother Bunch, in alarm. "Do not think of it!"

"I must speak with you. I will get a private room, where we shall be alone. So make haste, dear little sister! Do not resist before all these people—but come!"

The fear of becoming a public sight decided Mother Bunch, who, confused moreover with the adventure, trembling and frightened, followed her sister almost mechanically, and was dragged by her into the carriage, of which Ninny Moulin had just opened the door. And so, with the cloak of the Bacchanal Queen covering Mother Bunch's poor garments and de-

formed figure, the crowd had nothing to laugh at, and only wondered what this meeting could mean, while the coaches pursued their way to the eating-house in the Place du Châtelet.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTRAST.

SOME minutes after the meeting of Mother Bunch with the Bacchanal Queen, the two sisters were alone together in a small room in the tavern.

"Let me kiss you again," said Cephyse to the young seamstress; "at least now we are alone you will not be afraid?"

In the effort of the Bacchanal Queen to clasp Mother Bunch in her arms the cloak fell from the form of the latter. At sight of those miserable garments, which she had hardly had time to observe on the Place du Châtelet, in the midst of the crowd, Cephyse clasped her hands, and could not repress an exclamation of painful surprise. Then, approaching her sister, that she might contemplate her more closely, she took her thin, icy palms be-

tween her own plump hands, and examined for some minutes, with increasing grief, the suffering, pale, unhappy creature, ground down by watching and privations, and half-clothed in a poor, patched cotton gown.

"Oh, sister! to see you thus!" Unable to articulate another word, the Bacchanal Queen threw herself on the other's neck, and burst into tears. Then, in the midst of her sobs, she added: "Pardon! pardon!"

"What is the matter, my dear Cephyse?" said the young sewing girl, deeply moved, and gently disengaging herself from the embrace of her sister. "Why do you ask my pardon?"

"Why?" resumed Cephyse, raising her countenance, bathed in tears and purple with shame, "is it not shameful of me to be dressed in all this frippery, and throwing away so much money in follies, while you are thus miserably clad, and in need of everything—perhaps dying of want, for I have never seen your poor face look so pale and worn."

"Be at ease, dear sister! I am not ill. I was up rather late last night, and that makes me a little pale—but pray do not cry—it grieves me."

The Bacchanal Queen had but just ar-

rived, radiant in the midst of the intoxicated crowd, and yet it was Mother Bunch who was now employed in consoling her!

An incident occurred which made the contrast still more striking. Joyous cries were heard suddenly in the next apartment, and these words were repeated with enthusiasm: "Long live the Bacchanal Queen!"

Mother Bunch trembled, and her eyes filled with tears, as she saw her sister with her face buried in her hands, as if overwhelmed with shame. "Cephyse," she said, "I entreat you not to grieve so. You will make me regret the delight of this meeting, which is indeed happiness to me! It is so long since I saw you! But tell me —what ails you?"

"You despise me perhaps — you are right," said the Bacchanal Queen, drying her tears.

"Despise you? for what?"

"Because I lead the life I do, instead of having the courage to support misery along with you."

The grief of Cephyse was so heartbreaking that Mother Bunch, always good and indulgent, wishing to console her, and raise her a little in her own estimation, said to her tenderly: "In support-

ing it bravely for a whole year, my good Cephyse, you have had more merit and courage than I should have in bearing with it my whole life."

"Oh, sister! do not say that."

"In simple truth," returned Mother Bunch, "to what temptations is a creature like me exposed? Do I not naturally seek solitude, even as you seek a noisy life of pleasure? What wants have I? A very little suffices."

"But you have not always that little?"

"No—but, weak and sickly as I seem, I can endure some privations better than you could. Thus hunger produces in me a sort of numbness, which leaves me very feeble—but for you, robust and full of life, hunger is fury, is madness. Alas! you must remember how many times I have seen you suffering from those painful attacks, when work failed us in our wretched garret, and we could not even earn our four francs a week—so that we had nothing—absolutely nothing to eat—for our pride prevented us from applying to the neighbors."

"You have preserved the right to that honest pride."

"And you as well! Did you not struggle as much as a human creature could?

But strength fails at last—I know you well, Cephyse—it was hunger that conquered you, and the painful necessity of constant labor, which was yet insufficient to supply our common wants."

"But you could endure those privations—you endure them still."

"Can you compare me with yourself? Look," said Mother Bunch, taking her sister by the hand and leading her to a mirror placed above a couch, "look!—Dost think that God made you so beautiful, endowed you with such quick and ardent blood, with so joyous, animated, grasping a nature, and with such taste and fondness for pleasure, that your youth might be spent in a freezing garret, hid from the sun, nailed constantly to your chair, clad almost in rags, and working without rest and without hope? No! for He has given us other wants than those of eating and drinking. Even in our humble condition, does not beauty require some little ornament? Does not youth require some movement, pleasure, gayety? Do not all ages call for relaxation and rest? Had you gained sufficient wages to satisfy hunger, to have a day or so's amusement in the week, after working every other day for twelve or fifteen hours, and to procure the

neat and modest dress which so charming a face might naturally claim—you would never have asked for more, I am sure of it—you have told me as much a hundred times. You have yielded, therefore, to an irresistible necessity, because your wants are greater than mine."

"It is true," replied the Bacchanal Queen, with a pensive air; "if I could but have gained eighteenpence a day, my life would have been quite different; for, in the beginning, sister, I felt cruelly humiliated to live at a man's expense."

"Yes, yes—it was inevitable, my dear Cephyse; I must pity, but cannot blame you. You did not choose your destiny; but, like me, you have submitted to it."

"Poor sister!" said Cephyse, embracing the speaker tenderly; "you can encourage and console me in the midst of your own misfortunes, when I ought to be pitying you."

"Be satisfied!" said Mother Bunch; "God is just and good. If He has denied me many advantages, He has given me my joys, as you have yours."

"Joys?"

"Yes, and great ones—without which life would be too burdensome, and I should not have the courage to go through with it."

"I understand you," said Cephyse, with emotion; "you still know how to devote yourself for others, and that lightens your own sorrows."

"I do what I can, but, alas! it is very little; yet when I succeed," added Mother Bunch, with a faint smile, "I am as proud and happy as a poor little ant who, after a great deal of trouble, has brought a big straw to the common nest. But do not let us talk any more of me."

"Yes, but I must, even at the risk of making you angry," resumed the Bacchanal Queen, timidly; "I have something to propose to you which you once before refused. Jacques Rennepont has still, I think, some money left—we are spending it in follies—now and then giving a little to poor people we may happen to meet—I beg of you, let me come to your assistance—I see in your poor face, you cannot conceal it from me, that you are wearing yourself out with toil."

"Thanks, my dear Cephyse, I know your good heart; but I am not in want of anything. The little I gain is sufficient for me."

"You refuse me," said the Bacchanal Queen, sadly, "because you know that my claim to this money is not honorable—be

it so—I respect your scruples. But you will not refuse a service from Jacques; he has been a workman, like ourselves, and comrades should help each other. Accept it, I beseech you, or I shall think you despise me."

"And I shall think you despise me, if you insist any more upon it, my dear Cephyse," said Mother Bunch, in a tone at once so mild and firm that the Bacchanal Queen saw that all persuasion would be in vain. She hung her head sorrowfully, and a tear again trickled down her cheek.

"My refusal grieves you," said the other, taking her hand; "I am truly sorry—but reflect—and you will understand me."

"You are right," said the Bacchanal Queen, bitterly, after a moment's silence; "you cannot accept assistance from my lover—it was an insult to propose it to you. There are positions in life so humiliating that they soil even the good one wishes to do."

"Cephyse, I did not mean to hurt you—you know it well."

"Oh! believe me," replied the Bacchanal Queen, "gay and giddy as I am, I have sometimes moments of reflection, even in the midst of my maddest joy. Happily, such moments are rare."

"And what do you think of, then?"

"Why, that the life I lead is hardly the thing: then I resolve to ask Jacques for a small sum of money, just enough to subsist on for a year, and form the plan of joining you and gradually getting to work again."

"The idea is a good one; why not act upon it?"

"Because, when about to execute this project, I examined myself sincerely, and my courage failed. I feel that I could never resume the habit of labor, and renounce this mode of life, sometimes rich, as to-day, sometimes precarious—but at least free and full of leisure, joyous and without care, and at worst a thousand times preferable to living upon four francs a week. Not that interest has guided me. Many times have I refused to exchange a lover, who had little or nothing, for a rich man that I did not like. Nor have I ever asked anything for myself. Jacques has spent perhaps ten thousand francs the last three or four months, yet we only occupy two half-furnished rooms, because we always live out of doors, like the birds; fortunately, when I first loved him, he had nothing at all, and I had just sold some jewels that had been given me, for a hun-

dred francs, and put this sum in the lottery. As mad people and fools are always lucky, I gained a prize of four thousand francs. Jacques was as gay, and light-headed, and full of fun as myself, so we said: "We love each other very much, and, as long as this money lasts, we will keep up the racket; when we have no more, one of two things will happen—either we shall be tired of one another and so part—or else we shall love each other still, and then, to remain together, we shall try and get work again; and, if we cannot do so, and yet will not part—a bushel of charcoal will do our business!"

"Good heaven!" cried Mother Bunch, turning pale.

"Be satisfied! we have not come to that. We had still something left, when a kind of agent, who had paid court to me, but who was so ugly that I could not bear him for all his riches, knowing that I was living with Jacques, asked me to— But why should I trouble you with all these details? In one word, he lent Jacques money, on some sort of a doubtful claim he had, as was thought, to inherit some property. It is with this money that we are amusing ourselves — as long as it lasts."

"But, my dear Cephyse, instead of spending this money so foolishly, why not put it out to interest, and marry Jacques, since you love him?"

"Oh! in the first place," replied the Bacchanal Queen, laughing, as her gay and thoughtless character resumed its ascendency, "to put money out to interest gives one no pleasure. All the amusement one has is to look at a little bit of paper, which one gets in exchange for the nice little pieces of gold, with which one can purchase a thousand pleasures. As for marrying, I certainly like Jacques better than I ever liked any one; but it seems to me that, if we were married, all our happiness would end—for while he is only my lover, he cannot reproach me with what has passed—but, as my husband, he would be sure to upbraid me, sooner or later, and, if my conduct deserves blame, I prefer giving it to myself, because I shall do it more tenderly."

"Mad girl that you are! But this money will not last forever. What is to be done next?"

"Afterward! — Oh! that's all in the moon. To-morrow seems to me as if it would not come for a hundred years. If we were always saying: 'We must die one

day or the other'—would life be worth having?"

The conversation between Cephyse and her sister was here again interrupted by a terrible uproar, above which sounded the sharp, shrill noise of Ninny Moulin's rattle. To this tumult succeeded a chorus of barbarous cries, in the midst of which were distinguishable these words, which shook the very windows: "The Queen! the Bacchanal Queen!"

Mother Bunch started at this sudden noise.

"It is only my court, who are getting impatient," said Cephyse—and this time she could laugh.

"Heavens!" cried the sewing girl, in alarm; "if they were to come here in search of you?"

"No, no—never fear."

"But listen! do you not hear those steps? they are coming along the passage—they are approaching. Pray, sister, let me go out alone, without being seen by all these people."

That moment the door was opened, and Cephyse ran toward it. She saw in the passage a deputation headed by Ninny Moulin, who was armed with his formid-

able rattle, and followed by Rose-Pompon and Sleepinbuff.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or I poison myself with a glass of water!" cried Ninny Moulin.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or I publish my banns of marriage with Ninny Moulin!" cried little Rose-Pompon, with a determined air.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or the court will rise in arms, and carry her off by force!" said another voice.

"Yes, yes—let us carry her off!" repeated a formidable chorus.

"Jacques, enter alone!" said the Bacchanal Queen, notwithstanding these pressing summonses; then, addressing her court in a majestic tone, she added: "In ten minutes I shall be at your service—and then for a —— of a time!"

"Long live the Bacchanal Queen," cried Dumoulin, shaking his rattle as he retired, followed by the deputation, while Sleepinbuff entered the room alone.

"Jacques," said Cephyse, "this is my good sister."

"Enchanted to see you," said Jacques, cordially; "the more so as you will give me some news of my friend Agricola. Since I began to play the rich man, we

have not seen each other, but I like him as much as ever, and think him a good and worthy fellow. You live in the same house. How is he?"

"Alas, sir! he and his family have had many misfortunes. He is in prison."

"In prison!" cried Cephyse.

"Agricola in prison! what for?" said Sleepinbuff.

"For a trifling political offense. We had hoped to get him out on bail."

"Certainly; for five hundred francs it could be done," said Sleepinbuff.

"Unfortunately, we have not been able; the person upon whom we relied—"

The Bacchanal Queen interrupted the speaker by saying to her lover: "Do you hear, Jacques? Agricola in prison, for want of five hundred francs!"

"To be sure! I hear and understand all about it. No need of your winking. Poor fellow! he was the support of his mother."

"Alas! yes, sir—and it is the more distressing, as his father has but just returned from Russia, and his mother—"

"Here," said Sleepinbuff, interrupting, and giving Mother Bunch a purse; "take this—all the expenses here have been paid beforehand—this is what remains of my last bag. You will find here some twenty-

five or thirty Napoleons, and I cannot make a better use of them than to serve a comrade in distress. Give them to Agricola's father; he will take the necessary steps, and to-morrow Agricola will be at his forge, where I had much rather he should be than myself."

"Jacques, give me a kiss!" said the Bacchanal Queen.

"Now, and afterward, and again and again!" said Jacques, joyously embracing the queen.

Mother Bunch hesitated for a moment; but reflecting that, after all, this sum of money, which was about to be spent in follies, would restore life and happiness to the family of Agricola, and that hereafter these very five hundred francs, when returned to Jacques, might be of the greatest use to him, she resolved to accept this offer. She took the purse, and, with tearful eyes, said to him: "I will not refuse your kindness, M. Jacques; you are so good and generous. Agricola's father will thus at least have one consolation in the midst of heavy sorrows. Thanks! many thanks!"

"There is no need to thank me; money was made for others as well as ourselves."

Here, without, the noise re-commenced

more furiously than ever, and Ninuy Moulin's rattle sent forth the most doleful sounds.

"Cephyse," said Sleepinbuff, "they will break everything to pieces if you do not return to them, and I have nothing left to pay for the damage. Excuse us," added he, laughing, "but you see that royalty has its duties."

Cephyse, deeply moved, extended her arms to Mother Bunch, who threw herself into them, shedding sweet tears. "And now," said she to her sister, "when shall I see you again?"

"Soon—though nothing grieves me more than to see you in want, out of which I am not allowed to help you."

"You will come, then, to see me? It is a promise?"

"I promise you in her name," said Jacques; "we will pay a visit to you and your neighbor Agricola."

"Return to the company, Cephyse, and amuse yourself with a light heart; for M. Jacques has made a whole family happy."

So saying, and after Sleepinbuff had ascertained that she could go down without being seen by his noisy and joyous companions, Mother Bunch quietly withdrew,

eager to carry one piece of good news at least to Dagobert; but intending, first of all, to go to the Rue de Babylone, to the garden-house formerly occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville. We shall explain hereafter the cause of this determination.

As the girl quitted the eating-house, three men, plainly and comfortably dressed, were watching before it, and talking in a low voice. Soon after, they were joined by a fourth person, who rapidly descended the stairs of the tavern.

"Well?" said the three first, with anxiety.

"He is there."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Are there two Sleepers-in-buff on earth?" replied the other. "I have just seen him: he is togged out like one of the swell mob. They will be at table for three hours at least."

"Then wait for me, you others. Keep as quiet as possible. I will go and fetch the *captain*, and the game is bagged." So saying, one of the three men walked off quickly, and disappeared in a street leading from the square.

. . . . . .

At this same instant the Bacchanal Queen entered the banqueting-room, ac-

companied by Jacques, and was received with the most frenzied acclamations from all sides.

"Now then," cried Cephyse, with a sort of feverish excitement, as if she wished to stun herself; "now then, friends—noise and tumult, hurricane and tempest, thunder and earthquake—as much as you please!" Then, holding out her glass to Ninny Moulin, she added: "Pour out! pour out!"

"Long live the Queen!" cried they all, with one voice.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAROUSE.

THE Bacchanal Queen, having Sleepinbuff and Rose-Pompon opposite her, and Ninny Moulin on her right hand, presided at the repast, called a reveille-matin (wake-morning), generously offered by Jacques to his companions in pleasure.

Both young men and girls seemed to have forgotten the fatigues of a ball, begun at eleven o'clock in the evening, and finished at six in the morning; and all these

couples, joyous as they were amorous and indefatigable, laughed, ate, and drank, with youthful and Pantagruelian ardor, so that, during the first part of the feast, there was less chatter than clatter of plates and glasses.

The Bacchanal Queen's countenance was less gay, but much more animated than usual; her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes announced a feverish excitement; she wished to drown reflection, cost what it might. Her conversation with her sister often recurred to her, and she tried to escape from such sad remembrances.

Jacques regarded Cephyse from time to time with passionate adoration; for, thanks to the singular conformity of character, mind, and taste between him and the Bacchanal Queen, their attachment had deeper and stronger roots than generally belong to ephemeral connections founded upon pleasure. Cephyse and Jacques were themselves not aware of all the power of a passion which till now had been surrounded only by joys and festivities, and not yet been tried by any untoward event.

Little Rose-Pompon, left a widow a few days before by a student, who, in order to end the carnival in style, had gone into the country to raise supplies from his family,

under one of those fabulous pretenses which tradition carefully preserves in colleges of law and medicine—Rose-Pompon, we repeat, an example of rare fidelity, determined not to compromise herself, had taken for a chaperon the inoffensive Ninny Moulin.

This latter, having doffed his helmet, exhibited a bald head, encircled by a border of black, curling hair, pretty long at the back of the head. By a remarkable Bacchic phenomenon, in proportion as intoxication gained upon him, a sort of zone, as purple as his jovial face, crept by degrees over his brow, till it obscured even the shining whiteness of his crown. Rose-Pompon, who knew the meaning of this symptom, pointed it out to the company, and exclaimed with a loud burst of laughter: "Take care, Ninny Moulin! the tide of the wine is coming in."

"When it rises above his head, he will be drowned," added the Bacchanal Queen.

"Oh, queen! don't disturb me; I am meditating," answered Dumoulin, who was getting tipsy. He held in his hand, in the fashion of an antique goblet, a punch-bowl filled with wine, for he despised the ordinary glasses, because of their small size.

"Meditating," echoed Rose-Pompon, "Ninny Moulin is meditating. Be attentive!"

"He is meditating; he must be ill then!"

"What is he meditating? an illegal dance?"

"A forbidden Anacreontic attitude?"

"Yes, I am meditating," returned Dumoulin, gravely; "I am meditating upon wine, generally and in particular—wine, of which the immortal Bossuet"—Dumoulin had the very bad habit of quoting Bossuet when he was drunk—"of which the immortal Bossuet says (and he was a judge of good liquor): 'In wine are courage, strength, joy, and spiritual fervor'—when one has any brains," added Ninny Moulin, by way of parenthesis.

"Oh, my! how I adore your Bossuet!" said Rose-Pompon.

"As for my particular meditation, it concerns the question, whether the wine at the marriage of Cana was red or white. Sometimes I incline to one side, sometimes to the other—and sometimes to both at once."

"That is going to the bottom of the question," said Sleepinbuff.

"And, above all, to the bottom of the bottles," added the Bacchanal Queen.

"As your majesty is pleased to observe; and already, by dint of reflection and research, I have made a great discovery; namely, that, if the wine at the marriage of Cana was red—"

"It couldn't 'a' been white," said Rose-Pompon, judiciously.

"And if I had arrived at the conviction that it was neither white nor red?" asked Dumoulin, with a magisterial air.

"That could only be when you had drunk till all was *blue*," observed Sleep-inbuff.

"The partner of the queen says well. One may be too athirst for science; but never mind! From all my studies on this question, to which I have devoted my life —I shall await the end of my respectable career with the sense of having emptied tuns with a historical—theological—and archæological tone!"

It is impossible to describe the jovial grimace and tone with which Dumoulin pronounced and accentuated these last words, which provoked a general laugh.

"*Archieolopically?*" said Rose-Pompon. "What sawnee is that? Has he a tail? does he live in the water?"

"Never mind," observed the Bacchanal Queen; "these are words of wise men and

conjurers; they are like horse-hair bustles —they serve for filling out—that's all. I like better to drink; so fill the glasses, Ninny Moulin; some champagne, Rose-Pompon; here's to the health of your Philemon, and his speedy return."

"And to the success of his plant upon his stupid and stingy family!" added Rose-Pompon. The toast was received with unanimous applause.

"With the permission of her majesty and her court," said Dumoulin, "I propose a toast to the success of a project which greatly interests me, and has some resemblance to Philemon's jockeying. I fancy that the toast will bring me luck."

"Let's have it, by all means!"

"Well, then—success to my marriage!" said Dumoulin, rising.

These words provoked an explosion of shouts, applause, and laughter. Ninny Moulin shouted, applauded, laughed even louder than the rest, opening wide his enormous mouth, and adding to the stunning noise the harsh springing of his rattle, which he had taken up from under his chair.

When the storm had somewhat subsided, the Bacchanal Queen rose and said: "I drink to the health of the future Madame Ninny Moulin."

"Oh, Queen! your courtesy touches me so sensibly that I must allow you to read in the depths of my heart the name of my future spouse," exclaimed Dumoulin. "She is called Madame Honoree-Modeste-Messaline-Angele de la Sainte-Colombe, widow."

"Bravo! bravo!"

"She is sixty years old, and has more thousands of francs a year than she has hairs in her gray mustache or wrinkles on her face; she is so superbly fat that one of her gowns would serve as a tent for this honorable company. I hope to present my future spouse to you on Shrove-Tuesday, in the costume of a shepherdess that has just devoured her flock. Some of them wish to *con*vert her—but I have undertaken to *di*rect her, which she will like better. You must help me to plunge her headlong into all sorts of skylarking jollity."

"We will plunge her into anything you please."

"She will dance like *sixty!*" said Rose-Pompon, humming a popular tune.

"She will overawe the police."

"We can say to them: 'Respect this lady; your mother will perhaps be as old some day!'"

Suddenly the Bacchanal Queen rose; her countenance wore a singular expression of bitter and sardonic delight. In one hand she held a glass full to the brim. "I hear the Cholera is approaching in his seven-league boots," she cried. "I drink luck to the Cholera!" And she emptied the bumper.

Notwithstanding the general gayety, these words made a gloomy impression; a sort of electric shudder ran through the assemblage, and nearly every countenance became suddenly serious.

"Oh, Cephyse!" said Jacques, in a tone of reproach.

"Luck to the Cholera," repeated the Queen, fearlessly. "Let him spare those who wish to live, and kill those who dread to part!"

Jacques and Cephyse exchanged a rapid glance, unnoticed, by their joyous companions, and for some time the Bacchanal Queen remained silent and thoughtful.

"If you put it that way, it is different," cried Rose-Pompon, boldly. "To the Cholera! may none but good fellows be left on earth!"

In spite of this variation, the impression was still painfully impressive. Dumoulin, wishing to cut short this gloomy subject,

exclaimed: "Devil take the dead, and long live the living! And, talking of chaps who both live and live well, I ask you to drink a health most dear to our joyous queen, the health of our Amphitryon. Unfortunately, I do not know his respectable name, having only had the advantage of making his acquaintance this night; he will excuse me, then, if I confine myself to proposing the health of Sleepinbuff—a name by no means offensive to my modesty, as Adam never slept in any other manner. I drink to Sleepinbuff."

"Thanks, old son!" said Jacques, gayly; "were I to forget your name, I should call you 'Have-a-sip!' and I am sure that you would answer: 'I will.'"

"I will directly!" said Dumoulin, making the military salute with one hand and holding out the bowl with the other.

"As we have drunk together," resumed Sleepinbuff, cordially, "we ought to know each other thoroughly. I am Jacques Rennepont."

"Rennepont!" cried Dumoulin, who appeared struck by the name, in spite of his half-drunkenness: "you are Rennepont?"

"Rennepont in the fullest sense of the word. Does that astonish you?"

"There is a very ancient family of that name—the Counts of Rennepont."

"The deuce there is!" said the other, laughing.

"The Counts of Rennepont are also Dukes of Cardoville," added Dumoulin.

"Now, come, old fellow! do I look as if I belonged to such a family?—I, a workman out for a spree?"

"You a workman? why, we are getting into the Arabian Nights!" cried Dumoulin, more and more surprised. "You give us a Belshazzar's banquet, with accompaniment of carriages and four, and yet are a workman? Only tell me your trade, and I will join you, leaving the Vine of the Divine to take care of itself."

"Come, I say! don't think that I am a printer of flimsies, and a smasher!" replied Jacques, laughing.

"Oh, comrade! no such suspicion—"

"It would be excusable, seeing the rigs I run. But I'll make you easy on that point. I am spending an inheritance."

"Eating and drinking an uncle, no doubt?" said Dumoulin, benevolently.

"Faith, I don't know."

"What! you don't know whom you are eating and drinking?"

"Why, you see, in the first place, my father was a bonegrubber."

"The devil he was!" said Dumoulin, somewhat out of countenance, though in general not over-scrupulous in the choice of his bottle-companions; but, after the first surprise, he resumed, with the most charming amenity: "There are some rag-pickers very high by scent—I mean descent!"

"To be sure! you may think to laugh at me," said Jacques, "but you are right in this respect, for my father was a man of very great merit. He spoke Greek and Latin like a scholar, and often told me that he had not his equal in mathematics; besides, he had traveled a good deal."

"Well, then," resumed Dumoulin, whom surprise had partly sobered, "you may belong to the family of the Counts of Rennepont, after all."

"In which case," said Rose-Pompon, laughing, "your father was not a gutter-snipe by trade, but only for the honor of the thing."

"No, no—worse luck, it was to earn his living," replied Jacques; "but, in his youth, he had been well off. By what appeared, or rather by what did not appear, he had applied to some rich relation,

and the rich relation had said to him: 'Much obliged! try the work'us.' Then he wished to make use of his Greek and Latin and mathematics. Impossible to do anything—Paris, it seems, being chokefull of learned men—so my father had to look for his bread at the end of a hooked stick, and there, too, he must have found it, for I ate of it during two years, when I came to live with him, after the death of an aunt, with whom I had been staying in the country."

"Your respectable father must have been a sort of philosopher," said Dumoulin; "but unless you found an inheritance in a dustbin I don't see how you came into your property."

"Wait for the end of the song. At twelve years of age I was an apprentice at the factory of M. Tripeaud; two years afterward, my father died of an accident, leaving me the furniture of our garret—a mattress, a chair, and a table—and, moreover, in an old Eau de Cologne box, some papers (written, it seems, in English), and a bronze medal, worth about ten sous, chain and all. He had never spoken to me of these papers, so, not knowing if they were good for anything, I left them at the bottom of an old trunk, instead of burning

them—which was well for me, since it is upon these papers that I have had money advanced."

"What a Godsend!" said Dumoulin. "But somebody must have known that you had them?"

"Yes; one of those people that are always looking out for old debts came to Cephyse, who told me all about it; and, after he had read the papers, he said that the affair was doubtful, but that he would lend me ten thousand francs on it, if I liked. Ten thousand francs was a large sum, so I snapped him up!"

"But you must have supposed that these old papers were of great value?"

"Faith, no! since my father, who ought to have known their value, had never realized on them—and then, you see, ten thousand francs in good, bright coin, falling as it were from the clouds, are not to be sneezed at—so I took them—only the man made me do a bit of stiff as guarantee, or something of that kind."

"Did you sign it?"

"Of course—what did I care about it? The man told me it was only a matter of form. He spoke the truth, for the bill fell due a fortnight ago, and I have heard nothing of it. I have still about a thousand

francs in his hands, for I have taken him for my banker. And that's the way, old pal, that I'm able to flourish and be jolly all day long, as pleased as Punch to have left my old grinder of a master, M. Tripeaud."

As he pronounced this name, the joyous countenance of Jacques became suddenly overcast. Cephyse, no longer under the influence of the painful impression she had felt for a moment, looked uneasily at Jacques, for she knew the irritation which the name of M. Tripeaud produced within him.

"M. Tripeaud," resumed Sleepinbuff, "is one that would make the good bad, and the bad worse. They say that a good rider makes a good horse; they ought to say that a good master makes a good workman. Zounds! when I think of that fellow!" cried Sleepinbuff, striking his hand violently on the table.

"Come, Jacques—think of something else!" said the Bacchanal Queen. "Make him laugh, Rose-Pompon."

"I am not in humor to laugh," replied Jacques, abruptly, for he was getting excited from the effects of the wine; "it is more than I can bear to think of that man. It exasperates me! it drives me mad! You

should have heard him saying: 'Beggarly workmen! rascally workmen! they grumble that they have no food in their bellies; well, then, we'll give them bayonets to stop their hunger.' * And there's the children in his factory—you should see them, poor creatures!—working as long as the men—wasting away, and dying by the dozen—what odds? as soon as they were dead plenty of others came to take their places—not like horses, which can only be replaced with money."

"Well, it is clear that you do not like your old master," said Dumoulin, more and more surprised at his Amphitryon's gloomy and thoughtful air, and, regretting that the conversation had taken this serious turn, he whispered a few words in the ear of the Bacchanal Queen, who answered by a sign of intelligence.

"I don't like M. Tripeaud!" exclaimed Jacques. "I hate him—and shall I tell you why? Because it is as much his fault as mine that I have become a good-for-nothing loafer. I don't say it to screen myself; but it is the truth. When I was 'prenticed to him as a lad, I was all heart

* These atrocious words were actually spoken during the Lyons Riots.

and ardor, and so bent upon work that I used to take my shirt off to my task, which, by the way, was the reason that I was first called Sleepinbuff. Well! I might have toiled myself to death; not one word of encouragement did I receive. I came first to my work and was the last to leave off; what matter? it was not even noticed. One day, I was injured by the machinery. I was taken to the hospital. When I came out, weak as I was, I went straight to my work; I was not to be frightened; the others, who knew their master well, would often say to me: 'What a muff you must be, little one! What good will you get by working so hard?'—still I went on. But, one day, a worthy old man, called Father Arsene, who had worked in the house many years, and was a model of good conduct, was suddenly turned away, because he was getting too feeble. It was a death-blow to him; his wife was infirm, and, at his age, he could not get another place. When the foreman told him he was dismissed, he could not believe it, and he began to cry for grief. At that moment, M. Tripeaud passes; Father Arsene begs him with clasped hands to keep him at half wages. 'What!' says M. Tripeaud, shrugging his shoulders; 'do you think that I

will turn my factory into a house of invalids? You are no longer able to work —so be off!' 'But I have worked forty years of my life; what is to become of me?' cried poor Father Arsene. 'That is not my business,' answered M. Tripeaud; and, addressing his clerk, he added: 'Pay what is due for the week, and let him cut his stick.' Father Arsene did cut his stick; that evening, he and his old wife suffocated themselves with charcoal. Now, you see, I was then a lad; but that story of Father Arsene taught me that, however hard you might work, it would only profit your master, who would not even thank you for it, and leave you to die on the flags in your old age. So all my fire was damped, and I said to myself: 'What's the use of doing more than I just need? If I gain heaps of gold for M. Tripeaud, shall I get an atom of it?' Therefore, finding neither pride nor profit in my work, I took a disgust for it—just did barely enough to earn my wages—became an idler and a rake—and said to myself: 'When I get too tired of labor, I can always follow the example of Father Arsene and his wife.'"

While Jacques resigned himself to the current of these bitter thoughts, the other

guests, incited by the expressive pantomime of Dumoulin and the Bacchanal Queen, had tacitly agreed together; and, on a signal from the Queen, who leaped upon the table, and threw down the bottles and glasses with her foot, all rose and shouted, with the accompaniment of Ninny Moulin's rattle: "The Storm-blown Tulip! the quadrille of the Storm-blown Tulip!"

At these joyous cries, which burst suddenly, like a shell, Jacques started; then gazing with astonishment at his guests, he drew his hand across his brow, as if to chase away the painful ideas that oppressed him, and exclaimed: "You are right. Forward, the first couple! Let us be merry!"

In a moment, the table, lifted by vigorous arms, was removed to the extremity of the banqueting-room; the spectators, mounted upon chairs, benches, and window-ledges, began to sing in chorus the well-known air of les Etudiants, so as to serve instead of orchestra, and accompany the quadrille formed by Sleepinbuff, the Queen, Ninny Moulin, and Rose-Pompon.

Dumoulin, having intrusted his rattle to one of the guests, resumed his extravagant Roman helmet and plume; he had taken off his greatcoat at the commencement of the feast, so that he now appeared in all

the splendor of his costume. His cuirass of bright scales ended in a tunic of feathers, not unlike those worn by the savages who form the oxen's escort on Mardi Gras. Ninny Moulin had a huge paunch and thin legs, so that the latter moved about at pleasure in the gaping mouths of his large top boots.

Little Rose-Pompon with her pinched-up cocked-hat stuck on one side, her hands in the pockets of her trousers, her bust a little inclined forward, and undulating from right to left, advanced to meet Ninny Moulin; the latter danced, or rather leaped toward her, his left leg bent under him, his right leg stretched forward, with the toe raised, and the heel gliding on the floor; moreover, he struck his neck with his left hand, and by a simultaneous movement, stretched forth his right, as if he would have thrown dust in the eyes of his opposite partner.

This first figure met with great success, and the applause was vociferous, though it was only the innocent prelude to the step of the Storm-blown Tulip—when suddenly the door opened, and one of the waiters, after looking about for an instant in search of Sleepinbuff, ran to him and whispered some words in his ear.

"Me!" cried Jacques, laughing; "here's a go!"

The waiter added a few more words, when Sleepinbuff's face assumed an expression of uneasiness, as he answered: "Very well! I come directly"—and he made a step toward the door.

"What's the matter, Jacques?" asked the Bacchanal Queen, in some surprise.

"I'll be back immediately. Some one take my place. Go on with the dance," said Sleepinbuff, as he hastily left the room.

"Something that was not put down in the bill," said Dumoulin; "he will soon be back."

"That's it," said Cephyse. "Now cavalier seul!" she added, as she took Jacques' place, and the dance continued.

Ninny Moulin had just taken hold of Rose-Pompon with his right hand, and of the queen with his left, in order to advance between the two, in which figure he showed off his buffoonery to the utmost extent, when the door again opened, and the same waiter, who had called out Jacques, approached Cephyse with an air of consternation, and whispered in her ear, as he had before done to Sleepinbuff.

The Bacchanal Queen grew pale, uttered

a piercing scream, and rushed out of the room without a word, leaving her guests in stupefaction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAREWELL.

THE Bacchanal Queen, following the waiter, arrived at the bottom of the staircase. A coach was standing before the door of the house. In it she saw Sleepinbuff, with one of the men who, two hours before, had been waiting on the Place du Châtelet.

On the arrival of Cephyse, the man got down, and said to Jacques, as he drew out his watch: "I give you a quarter of an hour; it is all that I can do for you, my good fellow; after that we must start. Do not try to escape, for we'll be watching at the coach doors."

With one spring, Cephyse was in the coach. Too much overcome to speak before, she now exclaimed, as she took her seat by Jacques, and remarked the paleness of his countenance: "What is it? What do they want with you?"

"I am arrested for debt," said Jacques, in a mournful voice.

"You!" exclaimed Cephyse, with a heartrending sob.

"Yes, for that bill, or guarantee, they made me sign. And yet the man said it was only a form—the rascal!"

"But you have money in his hands; let him take that on account."

"I have not a copper; he sends me word by the bailiff that, not having paid the bill, I shall not have the last thousand francs."

"Then let us go to him and entreat him to leave you at liberty. It was he who came to propose to lend you this money. I know it well, as he first addressed himself to me. He will have pity on you."

"Pity?—a money-broker pity? No! no!"

"Is there no hope? none?" cried Cephyse, clasping her hands in anguish. "But there must be something done," she resumed. "He promised you—"

"You can see how he keeps his promises," answered Jacques, with bitterness. "I signed, without even knowing what I signed. The bill is overdue; everything is in order; it would be vain to resist. They have just explained all that to me."

"But they cannot keep you long in prison. It is impossible."

"Five years, if I do not pay. As I'll never be able to do so, my fate is certain."

"Oh! what a misfortune! and not to be able to do anything!" said Cephyse, hiding her face in her hands.

"Listen to me, Cephyse," resumed Jacques, in a voice of mournful emotion; "since I am here, I have thought only of one thing—what is to become of you?"

"Never mind me!"

"Not mind you?—art mad? What will you do? The furniture of our two rooms is not worth two hundred francs. We have squandered our money so foolishly that we have not even paid our rent. We owe three quarters, and we must not therefore count upon the furniture. I leave you without a coin. At least *I* shall be fed in prison—but how will you manage to live?"

"What is the use of grieving beforehand?"

"I ask you, how you will live to-morrow?" cried Jacques.

"I will sell my costume, and some other clothes. I will send you half the money, and keep the rest. That will last some days."

"And afterward?—afterward?"

"Afterward?—why, then—I don't know—how can I tell you? Afterward—I'll look about me."

"Hear me, Cephyse," resumed Jacques, with bitter agony. "It is now that I first know how much I love you. My heart is pressed as in a vise, at the thought of leaving you—and I shudder to think what is to become of you." Then—drawing his hand across his forehead, Jacques added: "You see we have been ruined by saying—'To-morrow will never come!'—for to-morrow *has* come. When I am no longer with you, and you have spent the last penny of the money gained by the sale of your clothes—unfit for work as you have become—what will you do next? Must I tell you what you will do!—you will forget me and—" Then, as if he recoiled from his own thoughts, Jacques exclaimed, with a burst of rage and despair—"Great Heaven! if that were to happen I should dash my brains out against the stones!"

Cephyse guessed the half-told meaning of Jacques, and throwing her arms around his neck, she said to him: "I take another lover?—never! I am like you, for I now first know how much I love you."

"But, my poor Cephyse—how will you live?"

"Well, I shall take courage. I will go back and dwell with my sister, as in old times; we will work together, and so earn our bread. I'll never go out, except to visit you. In a few days your creditor will reflect, that, as you can't pay him ten thousand francs, he may as well set you free. By that time I shall have once more acquired the habit of working. You shall see, you shall see!—and you also will again acquire this habit. We shall live poor, but content. After all, we have had plenty of amusement for six months, while so many others have never known pleasure all their lives. And believe me, my dear Jacques, when I say to you—I shall profit by this lesson. If you love me, do not feel the least uneasiness; I tell you, that I would rather die a hundred times, than have another lover."

"Kiss me," said Jacques, with eyes full of tears. "I believe you—yes, I believe you—and you give me back my courage, both for now and hereafter. You are right; we must try and get to work again, or else nothing remains but Father Arsène's bushel of charcoal; for, my girl," added Jacques, in a low and trembling voice, "I have been like a drunken man these six months, and now I am getting

sober, and see whither we were going. Our means once exhausted, I might perhaps have become a robber, and you—"

"Oh, Jacques! don't talk so—it is frightful," interrupted Cephyse; "I swear to you that I will return to my sister—that I will work—that I will have courage."

Thus saying, the Bacchanal Queen was very sincere; she fully intended to keep her word, for her heart was not yet completely corrupted. Misery and want had been with her, as with so many others, the cause and the excuse of her worst errors. Until now, she had at least followed the instincts of her heart, without regard to any base or venal motive. The cruel position in which she beheld Jacques had so far exalted her love that she believed herself capable of resuming, along with Mother Bunch, that life of sterile and incessant toil, full of painful sacrifices and privations, which once had been impossible for her to bear, and which the habits of a life of leisure and dissipation would now render still more difficult.

Still, the assurances which she had just given Jacques calmed his grief and anxiety a little; he had sense and feeling enough to perceive that the fatal track which he had hitherto so blindly followed

was leading both him and Cephyse directly to infamy.

One of the bailiffs, having knocked at the coach-door, said to Jacques: "My lad, you have only five minutes left—so make haste."

"So, courage, my girl—courage!" said Jacques.

"I will; you may rely upon me."

"Are you going upstairs again?"

"No—oh, no!" said Cephyse. "I have now a horror of this festivity."

"Everything is paid for, and the waiter will tell them not to expect us back. They will be much astonished," continued Jacques, "but it's all the same now."

"If you could only go with me to our lodging," said Cephyse, "this man would perhaps permit it, so as not to enter Saint-Pelagie in that dress."

"Oh! he will not forbid you to accompany me; but, as he will be with us in the coach, we shall not be able to talk freely in his presence. Therefore, let me speak reason to you for the first time in my life. Remember what I say, my dear Cephyse—and the counsel will apply to me as well as to yourself," continued Jacques, in a grave and feeling tone—"resume from today the habit of labor. It may be painful,

unprofitable—never mind—do not hesitate, for too soon will the influence of this lesson be forgotten. By-and-by it will be too late, and then you will end like so many unfortunate creatures—"

"I understand," said Cephyse, blushing; "but I will rather die than lead such a life."

"And there you will do well—for in that case," added Jacques, in a deep and hollow voice, "I will myself show you how to die."

"I count upon you, Jacques," answered Cephyse, embracing her lover with excited feeling; then she added, sorrowfully: "It was a kind of presentiment, when just now I felt so sad, without knowing why, in the midst of all our gayety—and drank to the Cholera, so that we might die together."

"Well! perhaps the cholera will come," resumed Jacques, with a gloomy air; "that would save us the charcoal, which we may not even be able to buy."

"I can only tell you one thing, Jacques, that to live and die together, you will always find me ready."

"Come, dry your eyes," said he, with profound emotion. "Do not let us play the children before these men."

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Some minutes after, the coach took the direction to Jacques' lodging, where he was to change his clothes, before proceeding to the debtors' prison.

. . . . . .

Let us repeat, with regard to the hunchback's sister—for there are things which cannot be too often repeated—that one of the most fatal consequences of the Inorganization of Labor is the Insufficiency of Wages.

The insufficiency of wages forces inevitably the greater number of young girls, thus badly paid, to seek their means of subsistence in connections which deprave them.

Sometimes they receive a small allowance from their lovers, which, joined to the produce of their labor, enables them to live. Sometimes, like the seamstress's sister, they throw aside their work altogether, and take up their abode with the man of their choice, should he be able to support the expense. It is during this season of pleasure and idleness that the incurable leprosy of sloth takes lasting possession of these unfortunate creatures.

This is the first phase of degradation that the guilty carelessness of Society imposes on an immense number of workwo-

men, born with instincts of modesty, and honesty, and uprightness.

After a certain time they are deserted by their seducers—perhaps when they are mothers. Or, it may be, that foolish extravagance consigns the imprudent lover to prison, and the young girl finds herself alone, abandoned, without the means of subsistence.

Those who have still preserved courage and energy go back to their work—but the examples are very rare. The others, impelled by misery, and by habits of indolence, fall into the lowest depths.

And yet we must pity, rather than blame them, for the first and virtual cause of their fall has been the insufficient remuneration of labor and sudden reduction of pay.

Another deplorable consequence of this inorganization is the disgust which workmen feel for their employment, in addition to the insufficiency of their wages. And this is quite conceivable, for nothing is done to render their labor attractive, either by variety of occupations, or by honorary rewards, or by proper care, or by remuneration proportionate to the benefits which their toil provides, or by the hope of rest after long years of industry. No — the

country thinks not, cares not, either for their wants or their rights.

And yet, to take only one example, machinists and workers in foundries, exposed to boiler explosions, and the contact of formidable engines, run every day greater dangers than soldiers in time of war, display rare practical sagacity, and render to industry—and, consequently, to their country—the most incontestable service, during a long and honorable career, if they do not perish by the bursting of a boiler, or have not their limbs crushed by the iron teeth of a machine.

In this last case does the workman receive a recompense equal to that which awaits the soldier's praiseworthy, but sterile courage—a place in an asylum for invalids? No.

What does the country care about it? And if the master should happen to be ungrateful, the mutilated workman, incapable of further service, may die of want in some corner.

Finally, in our pompous festivals of commerce, do we ever assemble any of the skillful workmen who alone have woven those admirable stuffs, forged and damascened those shining weapons, chiseled those goblets of gold and silver, carved the wood

and ivory of that costly furniture, and set those dazzling jewels with such exquisite art? No.

In the obscurity of their garrets, in the midst of a miserable and starving family, hardly able to subsist on their scanty wages, these workmen have contributed, at least, one-half to bestow those wonders upon their country, which make its wealth, its glory, and its pride.

A minister of commerce, who had the least intelligence of his high functions and duties, would require of every factory that exhibits on these occasions, the selection by vote of a certain number of candidates among whom the manufacturer would point out the one that appeared most worthy to represent the working classes in these great industrial solemnities.

Would it not be a noble and encouraging example to see the master propose for public recompense and distinction the workman, deputed by his peers, as among the most honest, laborious, and intelligent of his profession? Then one most grievous injustice would disappear, and the virtues of the workman would be stimulated by a generous and noble ambition—he would have an interest in doing well.

Doubtless, the manufacturer himself,

because of the intelligence he displays, the capital he risks, the establishment he founds, and the good he sometimes does, has a legitimate right to the prizes bestowed upon him. But why is the workman to be rigorously excluded from these rewards, which have so powerful an influence upon the people? Are generals and officers the only ones that receive rewards in the army? And when we have remunerated the captains of this great and powerful army of industry, why should we neglect the privates?

Why for them is there no sign of public gratitude? no kind or consoling word from august lips? Why do we not see, in France, a single workman wearing a medal as a reward for his courageous industry, his long and laborious career? The token, and the little pension attached to it, would be to him a double recompense, justly deserved. But, no! for humble labor that sustains the State there are only forgetfulness, injustice, indifference, and disdain!

By this neglect of the public, often aggravated by individual selfishness and ingratitude, our workmen are placed in a deplorable situation.

Some of them, notwithstanding their in-

cessant toil, lead a life of privations, and die before their time, cursing the social system that rides over them. Others find a temporary oblivion of their ills in destructive intoxication. Others, again—in great number—having no interest, no advantage, no moral or physical inducement to do more or better, confine themselves strictly to just that amount of labor which will suffice to earn their wages. Nothing attaches them to their work, because nothing elevates, honors, glorifies it in their eyes. They have no defense against the seductions of indolence; and if, by some chance, they find the means of living a while in repose, they give way by degrees to habits of laziness and debauchery, and sometimes the worst passions soil forever natures originally willing, healthy and honest—and all for want of that protecting and equitable superintendence which should have sustained, encouraged, and recompensed their first worthy and laborious tendencies.

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We now follow Mother Bunch, who, after seeking for work from the person that usually employed her, went to the Rue de Babylone, to the lodge lately occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville.

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CHAPTER V.

FLORINE.

WHILE the Bacchanal Queen and Sleepinbuff terminated so sadly the most joyous portion of their existence, the seamstress arrived at the door of the summer-house in the Rue de Babylone.

Before ringing, she dried her tears; a new grief weighed upon her spirits. On quitting the tavern, she had gone to the house of the person who usually found her in work; but she was told that she could not have any, because it could be done a third more cheaply by women in prison. Mother Bunch, rather than lose her last resource, offered to take it at the third less; but the linen had been already sent out, and the girl could not hope for employment for a fortnight to come, even if submitting to this reduction of wages. One may conceive the anguish of the poor creature; the prospect before her was to die of hunger, if she would not beg or steal. As for her visit to the lodge in the Rue de Babylone, it will be explained presently.

She rang the bell timidly; a few minutes after, Florine opened the door to her. The waiting-maid was no longer adorned after the charming taste of Adrienne; on the contrary, she was dressed with an affectation of austere simplicity. She wore a high-necked dress of a dark color, made full enough to conceal the light elegance of her figure. Her bands of jet-black hair were hardly visible beneath the flat border of a starched white cap, very much resembling the head-dress of a nun. Yet, in spite of this unornamental costume, Florine's pale countenance was still admirably beautiful.

We have said that, placed by former misconduct at the mercy of Rodin and M. d'Aigrigny, Florine had served them as a spy upon her mistress, notwithstanding the marks of kindness and confidence she had received from her. Yet Florine was not entirely corrupted; and she often suffered painful, but vain, remorse at the thought of the infamous part she was thus obliged to perform.

At sight of Mother Bunch, whom she recognized—for she had told her, the day before, of Agricola's arrest and Mdlle. de Cardoville's madness—Florine recoiled a step, so much was she moved with pity at

the appearance of the young seamstress. In fact, the idea of being thrown out of work, in the midst of so many other painful circumstances, had made a terrible impression upon the young workwoman; the traces of recent tears furrowed her cheeks —without her knowing it, her features expressed the deepest despair—and she appeared so exhausted, so weak, so overcome, that Florine offered her arm to support her, and said to her kindly: "Pray walk in and rest yourself; you are very pale, and seem to be ill and fatigued."

So saying, Florine led her into a small room, with fireplace and carpet, and made her sit down in a tapestried armchair by the side of a good fire. Georgette and Hebe had been dismissed, and Florine was left alone in care of the house.

When her guest was seated, Florine said to her, with an air of interest: "Will you not take anything? A little orange-flower water and sugar, warm."

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said Mother Bunch, with emotion, so easily was her gratitude excited by the least mark of kindness; she felt, too, a pleasing surprise that her poor garments had not been the cause of repugnance or disdain on the part of Florine.

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said she, "but I only require a little rest, for I come from a great distance. If you will permit me—"

"Pray rest yourself as long as you like, mademoiselle; I am alone in this pavilion since the departure of my poor mistress" —here Florine blushed and sighed—"so, pray make yourself quite at home. Draw near the fire—you will be more comfortable —and, gracious! how wet your feet are!—place them upon this stool."

The cordial reception given by Florine, her handsome face and agreeable manners, which were not those of an ordinary waiting-maid, forcibly struck Mother Bunch, who, notwithstanding her humble condition, was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of everything graceful and delicate. Yielding, therefore, to these attractions, the young seamstress, generally so timid and sensitive, felt herself almost at her ease with Florine.

"How obliging you are, mademoiselle!" said she, in a grateful tone. "I am quite confused with your kindness."

"I wish I could do you some greater service than offer you a place at the fire, mademoiselle. Your appearance is so good and interesting."

"Oh, mademoiselle!" said the other, with simplicity, almost in spite of herself; "it does one so much good to sit by a warm fire!" Then, fearing, in her extreme delicacy, that she might be thought capable of abusing the hospitality of her entertainer by unreasonably prolonging her visit, she added: "The motive that has brought me here is this. Yesterday, you informed me that a young workman, named Agricola Baudoin, had been arrested in this house."

"Alas! yes, mademoiselle. At the moment, too, when my poor mistress was about to render him assistance."

"I am Agricola's adopted sister," resumed Mother Bunch, with a slight blush; "he wrote to me yesterday evening from prison. He begged me to tell his father to come here as soon as possible, in order to inform Mdlle. de Cardoville that he, Agricola, had important matters to communicate to her, or to any person that she might send; but that he could not venture to mention them in a letter, as he did not know if the correspondence of prisoners might not be read by the governor of the prison."

"What!" said Florine, with surprise; "to my mistress, M. Agricola has some-

thing of importance to communicate?"

"Yes, mademoiselle; for, up to this time, Agricola is ignorant of the great calamity that has befallen Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"True; the attack was indeed so sudden," said Florine, casting down her eyes, "that no one could have foreseen it."

"It must have been so," answered Mother Bunch; "for, when Agricola saw Mdlle. de Cardoville for the first time, he returned home, struck with her grace, and delicacy, and goodness."

"As were all who approached my mistress," said Florine, sorrowfully.

"This morning," resumed the sewing girl, "when, according to Agricola's instructions, I wished to speak to his father on the subject, I found him already gone out, for he also is a prey to great anxieties; but my adopted brother's letter appeared to me so pressing, and to involve something of such consequence to Mdlle. de Cardoville, who had shown herself so generous toward him, that I came here immediately."

"Unfortunately, as you already know, my mistress is no longer here."

"But is there no member of her family to whom, if I could not speak myself, I

might at least send word by you, that Agricola has something to communicate of importance to this young lady?"

"It is strange!" said Florine, reflecting, and without replying. Then, turning toward the seamstress, she added: "You are quite ignorant of the nature of these revelations?"

"Completely so, mademoiselle; but I know Agricola. He is all honor and truth, and you may believe whatever he affirms. Besides, he would have no interest—"

"Good gracious!" interrupted Florine, suddenly, as if struck with a sudden light; "I have just remembered something. When he was arrested in a hiding-place where my mistress had concealed him, I happened to be close at hand, and M. Agricola said to me, in a quick whisper: 'Tell your generous mistress that her goodness to me will not go unrewarded, and that my stay in that hiding-place may not be useless to her.' That was all he could say to me, for they hurried him off instantly. I confess that I saw in those words only the expression of his gratitude, and his hope of proving it one day to my mistress; but now that I connect them with the letter he has written you—" said Florine, reflecting.

"Indeed," remarked Mother Bunch, "there is certainly some connection between his hiding-place here and the important secrets which he wishes to communicate to your mistress, or one of her family."

"The hiding-place had neither been inhabited nor visited for some time," said Florine, with a thoughtful air; "M. Agricola may have found therein something of interest to my mistress."

"If this letter had not appeared to me so pressing," resumed the other, "I should not have come hither; but have left him to do so himself, on his release from prison, which now, thanks to the generosity of one of his old fellow-workmen, cannot be very distant. But, not knowing if bail would be accepted to-day, I have wished faithfully to perform his instructions. The generous kindness of your mistress made it my first duty."

Like all persons whose better instincts are still roused from time to time, Florine felt a sort of consolation in doing good whenever she could with impunity—that is to say, without exposing herself to the inexorable resentments of those on whom she depended. Thanks to Mother Bunch, she might now have an opportunity of

rendering a great service to her mistress. She knew enough of the Princess de Saint-Dizier's hatred of her niece to feel certain that Agricola's communication could not, from its very importance, be made with safety to any but Mdlle. de Cardoville herself. She therefore said very gravely: "Listen to me, mademoiselle! I will give you a piece of advice which will, I think, be useful to my poor mistress—but which would be very fatal to me if you did not attend to my recommendations."

"How so, mademoiselle?" said the hunchback, looking at Florine with extreme surprise.

"For the sake of my mistress, M. Agricola must confide to no one, except herself, the important things he has to communicate."

"But, if he cannot see Mdlle. Adrienne, may he not address himself to some of her family?"

"It is from her family, above all, that he must conceal whatever he knows. Mdlle. Adrienne may recover, and then M. Agricola can speak to her. But should she never get well again, tell your adopted brother that it is better for him to keep his secret than to place it (which would infallibly happen) at the disposal of the enemies of my mistress."

"I understand you, mademoiselle," said Mother Bunch, sadly. "The family of your generous mistress do not love her, and perhaps persecute her?"

"I cannot tell you more on this subject now; and, as regards myself, let me conjure you to obtain M. Agricola's promise that he will not mention to any one in the world the step you have taken, or the advice I have given you. The happiness—no, not the happiness," resumed Florine, bitterly, as if that were a lost hope, "not the happiness—but the peace of my life depends upon your discretion."

"Oh! be satisfied!" said the sewing girl, both affected and amazed by the sorrowful expression of Florine's countenance; "I will not be ungrateful. No one in the world but Agricola shall know that I have seen you."

"Thank you — thank you, mademoiselle," cried Florine, with emotion.

"Do you thank me?" said the other, astonished to see the large tears roll down her cheeks.

"Yes, I am indebted to you for a moment of pure, unmixed happiness; for I have perhaps rendered a service to my dear mistress, without risking the increase of the troubles that already overwhelm me."

"You are not happy, then?"

"That astonishes you; but, believe me, whatever may be your fate, I would gladly change with you."

"Alas, mademoiselle!" said the seamstress; "you appear to have too good a heart for me to let you entertain such a wish—particularly now."

"What do you mean?"

"I hope, sincerely, mademoiselle," proceeded Mother Bunch, with deep sadness, "that you may never know what it is to want work, when labor is your only resource."

"Are you reduced to that extremity?" cried Florine, looking anxiously at the young seamstress, who hung her head and made no answer. She reproached herself, in her excessive delicacy, with having made a communication which resembled a complaint, though it had only been wrung from her by the thought of her dreadful situation.

"If it is so," went on Florine, "I pity you with all my heart; and yet I know not if my misfortunes are not still greater than yours."

Then, after a moment's reflection, Florine exclaimed, suddenly: "But let me see! If you are really in that position,

I think I can procure you some work."

"Is it possible, mademoiselle!" cried Mother Bunch. "I should never have dared to ask you such a service; but your generous offer commands my confidence, and may save me from destruction. I will confess to you, that, only this morning, I was thrown out of an employment which enabled me to earn four francs a week."

"Four francs a week!" exclaimed Florine, hardly able to believe what she heard.

"It was little, doubtless," replied the other; "but enough for me. Unfortunately, the person who employed me has found out where it can be done still cheaper."

"Four francs a week!" repeated Florine, deeply touched by so much misery and resignation. "Well! I think I can introduce you to persons who will secure you wages of at least two francs a day."

"I could earn two francs a day? Is it possible?"

"Yes, there is no doubt of it; only, you would have to go out by the day, unless you chose to take a place as servant."

"In my position," said Mother Bunch, with a mixture of timidity and pride, "one has no right, I know, to be overnice; yet I should prefer to go out by the day, and

still more to remain at home, if possible, even though I were to gain less."

"To go out is unfortunately an indispensable condition," said Florine.

"Then I must renounce this hope," answered Mother Bunch, timidly; "not that I refuse to go out to work—but those who do so, are expected to be decently clad—and I confess without shame, because there is no disgrace in honest poverty, that I have no better clothes than these."

"If that be all," said Florine, hastily, "they will find you the means of dressing yourself properly."

Mother Bunch looked at Florine with increasing surprise. These offers were so much above what she could have hoped, and what indeed was generally earned by needlewomen, that she could hardly credit them.

"But," resumed she, with hesitation, "why should any one be so generous to me, mademoiselle? How should I deserve such high wages?"

Florine started. A natural impulse of the heart, a desire to be useful to the seamstress, whose mildness and resignation greatly interested her, had led her to make a hasty proposition; she knew at what price would have to be purchased

the advantages she proposed, and she now asked herself if the hunchback would ever accept them on such terms. But Florine had gone too far to recede, and she durst not tell all. She resolved, therefore, to leave the future to chance; and as those who have themselves fallen are little disposed to believe in the infallibility of others, Florine said to herself that perhaps, in the desperate position in which she was, Mother Bunch would not be so scrupulous after all. Therefore she said: "I see, mademoiselle, that you are astonished at offers so much above what you usually gain; but I must tell you that I am now speaking of a pious institution, founded to procure work for deserving young women. This establishment, which is called St. Mary's Society, undertakes to place them out as servants, or by the day as needlewomen. Now this institution is managed by such charitable persons that they themselves undertake to supply an outfit, when the young women received under their protection are not sufficiently well clothed to accept the places destined for them."

This plausible explanation of Florine's magnificent offers appeared to satisfy the hearer. "I can now understand the high wages of which you speak, mademoiselle."

resumed she; "only I have no claim to be patronized by the charitable persons who direct this establishment."

"You suffer—you are laborious and honest—those are sufficient claims; only I must tell you they will ask if you perform regularly your religious duties."

"No one loves and blesses God more fervently than I do, mademoiselle," said the hunchback, with mild firmness; "but certain duties are an affair of conscience, and I would rather renounce this patronage than be compelled—"

"Not the least in the world. Only, as I told you, there are very pious persons at the head of this institution, and you must not be astonished at their questions on such a subject. Make the trial, at all events; what do you risk? If the propositions are suitable—accept them; if, on the contrary, they should appear to touch your liberty of conscience, you can always refuse—your position will not be the worse for it."

Mother Bunch had nothing to object to this reasoning, which left her at perfect freedom, and disarmed her of all suspicion. "On these terms, mademoiselle," said she, "I accept your offer, and thank you with all my heart. But who will introduce me?"

"I will—to-morrow, if you please."

"But they will perhaps desire to make some inquiries about me?"

"The venerable Mother Saint-Perpetue, superior of St. Mary's Convent, where the institution is established, will, I am sure, appreciate your good qualities without inquiry; but, if otherwise, she will tell you, and you can easily satisfy her. It is then agreed—to-morrow."

"Shall I call upon you here, mademoiselle?"

"No; as I told you before, they must not know that you came here on the part of M. Agricola, and a second visit might be discovered, and excite suspicion. I will come and fetch you in a coach; where do you live?"

"At No. 3 Rue Brise-Miche; as you are pleased to give yourself so much trouble, mademoiselle, you have only to ask the dyer, who acts as porter, to call down Mother Bunch."

"*Mother* Bunch?" said Florine, with surprise.

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered the seamstress, with a sad smile; "it is the name every one gives me. And you see," added the hunchback, unable to restrain a tear, "it is because of my ridiculous infirm-

ity, to which this name alludes, that I dread going out to work among strangers, because there are so many people who laugh at one, without knowing the pain they occasion. But," continued she, drying her eyes, "I have no choice, and must make up my mind to it."

Florine, deeply affected, took the speaker's hand, and said to her: "Do not fear. Misfortunes like yours must inspire compassion, not ridicule. May I not inqurie for you by your real name?"

"It is Magdalen Sliveau; but I repeat, mademoiselle, that you had better ask for Mother Bunch, as I am hardly known by any other name."

"I will, then, be in the Rue Brise-Miche to-morrow, at twelve o'clock."

"Oh, mademoiselle! how can I ever requite your goodness?"

"Don't speak of it; I only hope my interference may be of use to you. But of this you must judge for yourself. As for M. Agricola, do not answer his letter; wait till he is out of prison, and then tell him to keep his secret till he can see my poor mistress."

"And where is the dear young lady now?"

"I cannot tell you. I do not know where

they took her, when she was attacked with this frenzy. You will expect me to-morrow?"

"Yes—to-morrow," said Mother Bunch.

. . . . . .

The convent where Florine was to conduct the hunchback contained the daughters of Marshal Simon, and was next door to the lunatic asylum of Dr. Baleinier, in which Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

END OF VOLUME TWO.

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